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Peripheries at the Centre

Borderland Schooling in Interwar Europe



Machteld Venken

PERIPHERIES AT THE CENTRE

Studies in Contemporary European History

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Borderland Schooling in Interwar Europe



Machteld Venken



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I composed this monograph to the rhythm of my daughter's growing into a schoolchild. She is on every page of this book.

I read most of Mezzadra and Neilson's *Border as a Method*, referred to in the introduction, on Viennese playgrounds while looking after Maren and her older brother, Lew. After Maren found in my backpack a book with drawings of Polish-speaking children in refuge depicting their experiences of the First World War, she had problems falling asleep. My attention was triggered by the account of the girl writing an essay in German while using Polish orthography, mentioned in one of the chapters of this book, because a few days earlier my trilingual daughter had decided to stick to her neologism 'poestijn' – a combination of the Dutch word 'woestijn' and the Polish word 'pustynia' – even after finding out it was wrong, because she considered it more beautiful. An original source copy from the German Archive in Koblenz contains a hole Maren made after grabbing it from my desk. The archival documents from Katowice were gathered during a research summer Maren was too small to remember, but her four-year-old brother did. He put the city at the centre of his mental map of Europe and long continued to ask when we would finally move there.

Many of the books on the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were gathered during a library visit to Eupen five months into my high-risk pregnancy, a trip that felt like an expedition to the moon but was made easier thanks to a librarian allowing me to borrow more than the maximum number of books. My daughter was with me, asleep in her pram, when I was denied access to the national libraries in Austria, Belgium and Poland in order to make copies of pre-ordered books. I gave up on trying the same in the German State Library in Berlin, where I may have had more luck. When research assistant Boris Stamenić called me to ask whether to copy the archival materials concerning the transnational

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ABBREVIATIONS



AAK – Archiwum Archidiecezjalne w Katowicach (Archdiocese Archive in Katowice)

AAN – Archiwum Akt Nowych (Archive of New Records, Warsaw)

AD – Archives diplomatiques, Service public fédéral Affaires étrangères, Bruxelles (Diplomatic Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brussels)

APK – Archiwum Państwowe w Katowicach (State Archive in Katowice)

ASPL – Archiwum Szkoły Podstawowej w Lublińcu (Archive Primary School in Lubliniec)

BABL – Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde (German Federal Archives Berlin-Lichterfelde)

BAK – Bundesarchiv Koblenz (German Federal Archives in Koblenz)

BDM – Bund deutscher Mädel (League of German Girls)

CARHIF – Centre d'Archives et de Recherches pour Histoire des Femmes (National Work for Child Welfare, Archive and Research Centre for Women's History)

CEGESOMA – Centre d'Études et Documentation Guerre et Sociétés contemporaines (Centre for Historical Research and Documentation on War and Contemporary Society, Brussels)

DSHI – Dokumentesammlung des Herder-Instituts Marburg (Archive in the Herder Institute in Marburg)

HF – Heimattreue Front (Homeland Loyalty Front)

KADOC – Documentatie- en Onderzoekscentrum voor Religie, Cultuur en Samenleving, KU Leuven (Documentation and Research Center on Religion, Culture and Society, Catholic University of Leuven)

LVR – Landesverband Rheinland (Regional Rhineland Association)

MWRiOP – Ministerstwo Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia
Publicznego (Polish Ministry of Religious Denominations and
Public Enlightenment)

MYRCIK – Private Archive of Jan Myrcik, Koszęcin

NSDAP – Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National
Socialist German Workers' Party)

PAAAB – Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts Berlin (Political
Archive of the German Federal Foreign Office)

RULAND – Private Archive of Herbert Ruland, Eynatten

SA – Stadtarchiv Aachen (Aachen City Archive)

SCNNSP – Stowarzyszenie Chrześcijańsko-Narodowe Nauczycielstwa
Szkół Powszechnych (Association of Christian-National Teachers of
General Schools)

SE – Staatsarchiv Eupen (State Archive in Eupen)

TSYSHO – Di Tsentrale Yidishe Shul-Organizatsye (Central Jewish
School Organisation)

VDA – Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland (Association for
Germanness Abroad)

Volksbund – Deutschoberschlesischer Volksbund für Polnisch-Schlesien
zur Wahrung der Minderheitsrechte (German Upper Silesian Na-
tional Association of Polish Silesia for Minority Rights Protection)

ZNP – Związek Nauczycieli Polskich (Association of Polish Teachers)



German Territorial Changes in the Twentieth Century (copyright: Peter Lang).



Upper Silesia (1921–39) (copyright: Malte Helfer).



The regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy after the Treaty of Versailles (1920)
(copyright: Peter Lang).

INTRODUCTION



There is something peculiar about the German alphabet book Joseph Lousberg composed in 1929 for the borderlands that had switched to Belgian state sovereignty in the aftermath of the First World War, having formerly belonged to the German Empire.¹ The alphabet book was commissioned by a local city council in order to assist borderland pupils learning to read and write in their German mother tongue.² Born in Montzen, a Walloonian village in Belgium where German was spoken, Joseph Lousberg (1892–1960) graduated with a degree in pedagogy from a Belgian teaching seminary. After a career spent working in a private school, teaching the children of German merchants in the Flemish city of Antwerp, as well as in a primary school close to his place of birth, he was appointed school inspector of Belgium's newest borderlands.³

Pupils throughout Belgium learned French or Dutch by beginning to read and write lower case letters, before progressing to upper case ones. However, since the German language requires all nouns to be capitalised (for example, *Haus*), pupils in Germany started off by learning capital letters. What Lousberg did was to apply the pedagogical methods he had learned in Belgium to his German primer, making borderland pupils learn all the lower case letters in German. Only once they had mastered these would they be introduced to upper case ones.⁴ Borderland pupils had to be capable of writing full sentences, such as *was hören wir? wir hören rufen* (what do we hear? we hear shouting), before they were taught how to write nouns, such as *Baum* (tree).

Lousberg's book became the standard German primer in Belgium's newest borderlands and would be reprinted on a regular basis until the mid-1950s.⁵ In an anonymous letter to the author on the occasion of the first edition, a local inhabitant wrote: 'I spent an enjoyable hour browsing your book. My boys did the same. It is the ultimate proof. Wonderful!'⁶ An anonymous German pedagogue, however, did not share this reader's

Notes for this chapter begin on page 33.

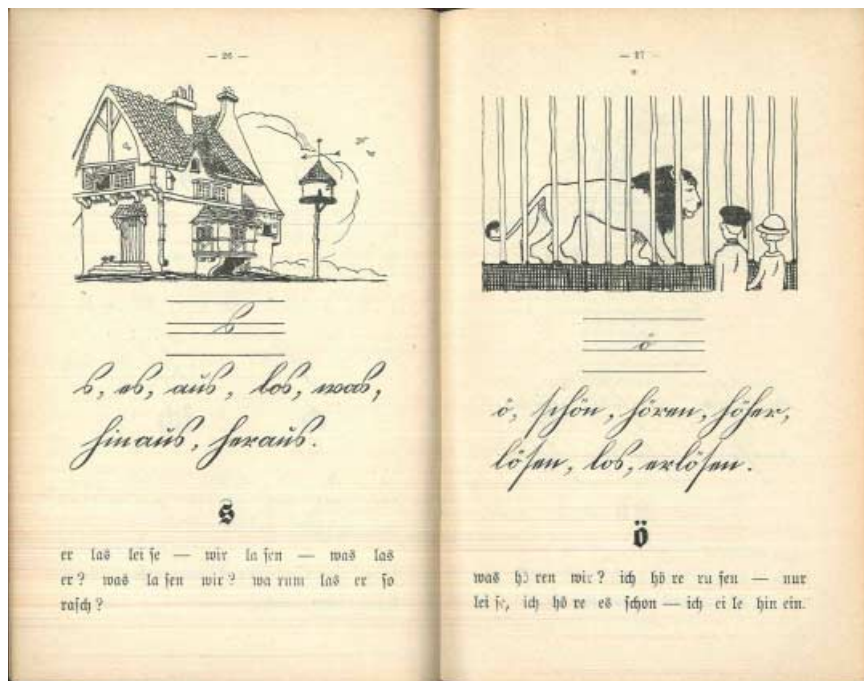


FIGURE 0.1. Joseph Lousberg's alphabet book developed for German-speaking pupils in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmédy (Lousberg, *Fibel oder Lesebüchlein*, 1929, 14 – copyright: State Archive in Eupen).

excitement. Making no allowances for a low-budget production published in times of economic crisis by a local editor, he considered Lousberg's book the 'most inadequate' of all the 'ABC booklets of the twentieth century'.⁷ Drawing upon a scientific understanding of pedagogy developed within the German Empire, and underscoring the prevailing concern within the Weimar Republic that German culture was to uphold its hegemonic role abroad, he did not shy away from introducing child psychology to support his aversion for the absence of nouns. 'The child is at a formative age and longs for real things', he complained: 'a cohesive whole with a case-sensitive mixture is nowhere to be found.'⁸ He was not alone in his concerns. German-language educators working outside the Weimar Republic's state borders also feared that an improper learning of the German language would cause borderland pupils to grow up improperly and develop personality problems.⁹

Belgium's eastern neighbour had a history of compulsory primary education that dated back to the early 1800s, and had grown into a giant in terms of reform pedagogy at the end of that century, since science was con-

sidered a means to reduce the latent social tensions between the working class and the bourgeoisie that had accelerated during industrialisation.¹⁰ The Belgian state, by contrast, only implemented compulsory education after the First World War, and made sure to formulate vague pedagogical requirements so as not to antagonise the freedom of the church in Catholic schools. It happened to be the case that all the primary schools under the jurisdiction of Joseph Lousberg's inspectorate were Catholic.

This book starts from the observation that in the interwar years three ways of thinking came together on the European continent: thinking in terms of borderlands, thinking in terms of language and thinking in terms of children. Through a symmetrical comparison of two case study borderlands – Polish Upper Silesia, which switched from German to Polish state sovereignty in the aftermath of the First World War, and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, which switched from German to Belgian state sovereignty – the argument is put forward that borderland schools were elected to play a crucial role in the creation of a stable, peaceful Europe. The book is an investigation into how schools, their curricula and the pupils they educated were reconfigured in interwar continental Europe after the switch in state sovereignty. In this introduction, it will be shown how thinking in terms of borderlands, language and children gained in importance across Europe throughout the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, as well as how that happened in similar or different ways within the political entities of relevance for this book: Prussia and later the German Empire, the Habsburg and Russian Empires, as well as the Southern Netherlands and later the Belgian Kingdom.

Thinking in Terms of Borderlands

The idea of self-determination became somehow interlinked with that of peace. Whereas self-determination arose as a theoretical concept in the texts of Lenin published in 1915 and early 1916, it only later became the motor for political action in the steppe rebellion of 1916, which laid bare how the problem of the Russian imperial regime was, as the historian Joshua Sanborn recently concluded, 'precisely that it was imperial. Unable to understand indigenous peoples on the periphery, it oppressed and exploited them. A revolution would have to end Russian ignorance and chauvinism and grant a measure of self-determination to non-Russians across the country.'¹¹ Soon after the February Revolution had come to an end, Bolshevik leaders started to speak of self-determination and peace. Peace was to bring an end to the oppression of people hitherto considered at the margins of society by granting them their own sovereignty. Impe-

rial paternalism needed to be exchanged for national self-determination.¹² Upon the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty in March 1918 between the Bolshevik government and the Central Powers in order to end Russia's involvement in the war, Trotsky fulminated: 'This is a peace which, whilst pretending to free Russian border provinces, really transforms them into German States and deprives them of their right of self-determination.'¹³ The Western Allies despised German expansionism and responded by making the dissolution of imperial regimes and the self-determination of people in Central and Eastern Europe their war aims.¹⁴

Once the war had come to an end, statesmen and diplomats gathered in France in 1919 to lay out the conditions and prospects of peace. Different imagined visions of Europe occupied the minds of the main architects of Europe's recomposition. These political representatives have often been referred to as the Big Four. Alongside Woodrow Wilson of the United States were Georges Clemenceau of France, David Lloyd George of the United Kingdom and Vittorio Emanuele Orlando of Italy, the latter being absent when the Treaty of Versailles was negotiated.¹⁵ In the last year of his life, Georges Clemenceau, for example, defended the Treaty of Versailles, as a result of which Germany handed over a considerable amount of its territory on its western, northern and, most significantly, eastern borders to neighbouring states, as a treaty engendering a 'Europe founded upon right' and aiming at bringing about universal peace.¹⁶ Clemenceau was attacked by nationalists in France, who were afraid of German aggression and believed that the Rhineland, a region that belonged to the interwar German state and held borders with France, should have been annexed following the First World War, instead of being temporarily occupied by the military. In the Anglo-Saxon world, however, politicians grumbled that Clemenceau's bold attempt to overpower Germany would spark a desire for vengeance.¹⁷ Woodrow Wilson, by contrast, spoke of installing a supranational order based on liberal principles. Situating the cause of the war in Prussia's militarism and the autocratic ruling style of the Hohenzollern dynasty, Wilson argued that Germany's power needed to be restricted. The principle of self-determination he so vehemently supported was often given a national interpretation and used as an authoritative rhetorical means by all parties involved at the negotiation tables in Paris.¹⁸ The Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sidney Sonnino, commented: 'The war undoubtedly had had the effect of over-exciting the feeling of nationality. . . Perhaps America fostered it by putting the principles so clearly.'¹⁹

Since the concept of self-determination remained vaguely defined and, therefore, contentious (did it refer to elaborated democratic self-government, or should all be given the opportunity to live in what they imagined as their own state?), it did not rectify the world's problems.²⁰ In-

stead, the different visions of the architects were heavily debated over the maps laid out on French tables in order to bring the continent to peace.²¹ Indeed, whereas German historiography has long been preoccupied with researching questions related to the burden of guilt on German shoulders, or Germany's duty to deliver reparation payments, the most important change brought about by the Paris Peace Conference was the reshaping of the continent, which ended the long-lasting era of multinational empires in Europe.²²

Negotiators at the Paris Peace Conference made use of scientific knowledge in order to redraw state border lines in Europe. State border lines were first created in the Peace of Westphalia (1648), in order to separate polities holding sovereignty over populations and to seal former borders operating as zones between areas where more control was asserted.²³ The arrival of the modern state system and the invention of the state border line was accompanied by a belief in the principle of *cujus regio, ejus religio*, pointing at the desire to create homogeneity among populations within state border lines.²⁴ With the scientific discipline of geography increasingly being used as an important paradigm for understanding social phenomena since the late nineteenth century, it comes as no surprise that maps played a prominent role in the peace-making process after the First World War.²⁵

However, the contours of Europe's interwar state border lines were not drawn by statesmen and diplomats in France alone, but came about through a dynamic interplay between diplomatic negotiations and the violence erupting in several Central and Eastern European borderlands.²⁶ That an intertwinement of self-determination and peace did not mean much in Central and Eastern Europe had already been made clear when, within a couple of days of the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty, the military of the Central Powers engaged in fighting with Bolshevik troops in Ukraine.²⁷ Once the Great War had come to an end, the competing aspirations of self-determination within the lands of the former multinational and multiethnic empires often took the shape of civil wars and generated facts that the architects of Europe's peace could not ignore.²⁸ The results sometimes took the form of consensus decisions about the shape of state border lines as predetermined by the Big Four, decisions that were later to be discussed and ratified by representatives of existing or emerging nation-states.²⁹ Sometimes, however, they were dictated by troops on the ground. This was the case with the Habsburg city of Teschen in Silesia, which was invaded by Czechoslovakian troops in January 1919, and would, after having been discussed in international forums for eighteen months, mainly remain under Czechoslovakian sovereignty, leading to the city being split into a Czechoslovakian part called Těšín and a Polish

part called Cieszyn.³⁰ In the case of Upper Silesia, a region formerly part of the German Empire, moreover, a complex decision-making process with different and changing voices in Paris, on the one hand, and three uprisings within the region, on the other, would eventually lead to the region being divided into Polish Upper Silesia and German Upper Silesia.

A majority of historians have come to agree that the Paris Peace conference did not establish a stable peace order.³¹ That the problems were paramount, and that decision-makers acted under the pressure of time, was already known at the time. When the French Marshall Ferdinand Foch saw the Treaty of Versailles, for example, he fumed: 'This is not a peace. It is an armistice for 20 years.'³² Even Woodrow Wilson, when he left Paris, told his wife: 'Well, it is finished, and as no one is satisfied, it makes me hope we have made a just peace.'³³ Later, he appeared unable to mobilise enough senators in the United States to vote in favour of membership of the supranational institution he had designed and advocated: the League of Nations.³⁴ Nevertheless, the Treaty of Versailles kept Germany on the map of Europe, shrinking its territory by 13 per cent and its population by 10 per cent, while reducing, but not ruining, its economic power.³⁵ With the hindsight of time, it might be tempting to make the Treaty of Versailles the scapegoat for the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. But the past could have turned out differently if interwar European states had had other leaders, if democracy in Germany had been rooted more profoundly, and if people had lived under a more favourable economic horizon.³⁶

The Paris Treaties determined the conditions of life within interwar Europe to a considerable extent. This monograph offers insight into the interwar past of three nation-states whose borders changed as a result of the Treaty of Versailles: Poland, Germany and Belgium. Whereas Poland and Belgium were surrounded by larger countries exerting not only political and economic pressure but also cultural and social prestige, Germany struggled to overcome its compounded power and to act once more as the great nation it had previously been. The leading aim in German foreign policy in the interwar years was to revise the Treaty of Versailles.³⁷ German politicians never lost their national aspirations towards the people they considered to have been left behind after the reshaping of Europe, and supported revisionist movements in the borderlands Germany had ceded.

The various treaties that resulted from the peace negotiations in Paris and restructured Europe entailed a certain ambiguity.³⁸ Interwar Europe gathered a patchwork of nation-states, but the Western and Central Eastern states receiving borderlands were treated differently. Unlike Belgium, France, Denmark and Italy, the states more to the east of the European continent had to adhere to the supranational supervision of the newly

founded League of Nations over the way they treated their inhabitants categorised as having a minority status.³⁹ Poland's case provoked Europe's architects into setting up the supranational body of the League of Nations. It was to shape and control the preconditions under which the new Polish state could be established and would function.⁴⁰ As a result of the Treaty of Versailles, Poland gained most of the former Prussian provinces of Posen and West Prussia (including a Polish corridor to the Baltic Sea), as well as areas in Upper Silesia and East Prussia.⁴¹

By contrast, as victors of the war, Belgian representatives in Versailles were of the opinion that they should be rewarded for their war efforts and be granted an extension of their borders. However, during the negotiations, Belgian diplomats acquired less territory than all the other victorious countries on the European continent, with the exception of Portugal.⁴² The Belgian delegation left the negotiations in France with the guarantee that Belgium could control Ruanda-Urundi, which it had occupied during the First World War, under the supervision of the League of Nations, the promise that the inhabitants of a small piece of land on the eastern border of the Belgian Kingdom, the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, would receive the opportunity to reject a change to Belgian state sovereignty, and the right to annex a square-mile piece of land called Neutral Moresnet that had arisen a century earlier as a result of careless formulations during the Congress of Vienna.⁴³ Owing to the fact that in Western Europe states received the right to exercise unlimited control within their own state borders, the Belgian Kingdom could steer the public opinion of borderland inhabitants in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy without having to fear supranational control.⁴⁴ Following a public expression of opinion, which remained contested throughout the entire interwar period, the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were included within the Belgian Kingdom as its new eastern borderlands.⁴⁵

The creation of a Europe of nation-states did not solve the question of how to include borderland inhabitants who differed from each other on national, religious, linguistic, cultural and/or ethnic grounds.⁴⁶ Although it was meant to be set up as a national state, interwar Poland was very much a replica of the multinational empires it had been dissolved from, albeit with changed power dynamics between ethnic groups.⁴⁷ The Belgian Kingdom, meanwhile, had transformed into a multilingual political democracy of the masses. Political representatives in Poland and Belgium developed policies to make their inhabitants participate in their systems of collective values and to distinguish themselves from what became constructed as the others. They established or consolidated institutions spreading political, societal and cultural ideas with nationalist content. They faced the challenge of coming up with a convincing programme for

identification capable of competing with the much older and stronger traditions and programmes of collective belonging. Borderlands turned out to be the places where national programmes were most vulnerable to competing markers of loyalty.⁴⁸ At the same time, the power structures and power strategies of nation-states remained deeply influenced by bilateral and international negotiations and decisions. When the Locarno Treaties were signed in 1925, for example, the geographical disposition established under the Treaty of Versailles at Germany's western border was rendered inviolable, while at the same time the competency of the international order to protect Germany's eastern border decreased, inevitably leading to a relative weakening of Polish state sovereignty. This book will demonstrate how the interwar borderlands became the places where the visions of a peaceful and just Europe that underscored the political geography of the interwar period experienced their deepest challenge.

Thinking in Terms of Language

The redrawing of borders and reshaping of borderlands according to the principle of self-determination was accompanied by an obsession with language. 'Nationalism', as Thomas Paul Bonfiglio concluded, 'was born, in the early modern period, *of* and *in* language and articulated in the apparently innocent kinship metaphors of maternity and nativity', which made 'the notion of the linguistic birthright of the native speaker' self-evident.⁴⁹ While maps were being stretched out on tables in Versailles, ethnographical statistical data on knowledge of languages was used in order to establish peace. The question of how to mark out nations had appeared on the agenda of the International Statistical Congresses organised since the mid-nineteenth century, and by 1872 statisticians had agreed that a question concerning language use needed to be included in state censuses.⁵⁰ Data that had been gathered through a compartmentalising of people's practices into boxes not only documented the scope of nations, but could also be selectively cited by nationalists as elements of scientific proof of the use of a specific mother tongue in order to call new nations into existence.⁵¹

In 1919, language was considered the primary denominator of national belonging, while the national paradigm was to become the foundation stone of the new political world order.⁵² Inspired by the *oeuvre* of Herder and Fichte, nationalists throughout the European continent accepted as self-evident the belief that linguistic allegiance established the essence of national or ethnic unity.⁵³ This book will show how these convictions resonated throughout the interwar years. Language did find itself at the

heart of the political agenda and the everyday lives of inhabitants in both of the two borderlands at study, Polish Upper Silesia and the border regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, at certain moments during the interwar period. In Polish Upper Silesia, language learning policies bore witness to the belief that a monolingual upbringing of borderland pupils was deemed most appropriate. In Belgium, disputes between state representatives about equal use of the French and Dutch languages resulted in new language learning policies for primary school children. The question at the centre of the debate – in a country where compulsory education was introduced in 1919 and bilingualism was considered a noble goal to strive for – was when second language learning in primary schools should start. As will be expanded upon in this book, within the newly gained border regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, that debate took an interesting twist. Before this book offers a detailed analysis of interwar language learning in the two case study borderlands, this introduction sheds light on how these borderlands joined, respectively, the Polish and Belgian nation-state at moments in time when certain important struggles about language had come to an end, and new ones were to arise. A focus on these language struggles enables us to understand the relationship – the tensions and dynamics – between spaces bounded by state border lines, through political decisions and the execution of political power, and transnational spaces of interaction transcending these politically bounded spaces.⁵⁴ These spaces were not in opposition to one another, but instead bolstered and eventually perhaps came to constitute one another.⁵⁵

The largest part of Upper Silesia joined Prussia when the region was divided between Prussia and the Habsburg Empire in the year 1740. Upper Silesia found itself under the rule of the Polish king or Polish princes until the early fourteenth century, and had later been part of the Czech crown lands. In 1526, the terrains previously governed by the kings of Bohemia came under Habsburg rule.⁵⁶ At the time, the inhabitants of Upper Silesia communicated with each other in Silesian, a West-Slavic dialect most closely related to Polish but also significantly influenced by German, and local inhabitants were used to switching between their vernacular and German or Polish when they were talking at home, communicating with authorities or engaging in trade.⁵⁷ There was not sufficient incentive to impose one vernacular or language upon another community, since the absence of accessible education caused social and economic mobility to be limited. As a result, speaking Silesian long remained a normal and widespread phenomenon.

The privileging of the German language and the attack on Roman Catholicism launched during the *Kulturkampf* in the late nineteenth century, however, contributed to the mass politicisation of the predominantly

Catholic population in Upper Silesia, giving rise to the establishment of bilingual political parties and social organisations directing loyalties to religion; as Roman Catholics, Upper Silesians could continue to operate as bilinguals.⁵⁸ The institutionalisation of bilingual everyday practices in a time of increasing nationalist German, Polish and Czech mobilisation gave birth to the regional specificity of Upper Silesia, a specificity that would remain characteristic long after state border lines had been redrawn following the First World War.⁵⁹

Although the relationship between language and nation was specific, highly complex and volatile, during the conflict over self-determination in the aftermath of the First World War, language was used as the primary criterion for national belonging.⁶⁰ The plebiscite campaign following the Treaty of Versailles, targeted at gaining the votes of the average man or woman, was characterised by recurring and intensifying violence precisely because clearly delineating Poles from Germans along a linguistic axis appeared impossible. 'The violence itself', the historian Tim Wilson recently noted, '*became* the boundary. It kept things simple. That is what is was intended to do.'⁶¹ The Association for Upper Silesians (Bund der Oberschlesier/Związek Górnoślązaków), on the other hand, advocated that Silesians were a multilingual nation and published its documents in both Polish and German, while a larger number of local inhabitants are said to have shared the feeling that their opportunities for social advancement were limited because they did not finish their secondary school education and were therefore not considered literate in any of these languages.⁶²

The division of state sovereignty over Upper Silesia between Germany and Poland was established after a civil war in which extreme violence was used in order to bring about clear lines of linguistic division.⁶³ Although the civil war had shown that 'language' was just as imagined as 'nation' because the lines of linguistic division could be drawn wherever one wanted,⁶⁴ people in Upper Silesia continued to live with the consequences of this illusion once the state border line was drawn, and these consequences became especially pertinent in language learning policies for primary school children.

In the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, the shift towards Belgian state sovereignty following the Treaty of Versailles also brought about an important change in attitudes towards language. It is difficult to think of an appropriate term to refer to the strip of land that came under Belgian state sovereignty after the First World War. In this book they are referred to as the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, although they were never clearly defined politico-geographical units and were united within one administrative entity for the first time upon joining the Belgian Kingdom (Eupen-Malmedy), and only for five years. Their legal

inclusion as a separate entity within the Belgian Kingdom appeared after a long process which started centuries earlier, in which the zonal area between Prussia and the Southern Netherlands, characterised by language diversity, gradually evolved into a place where the equation of language and state on both sides of the Belgian-German state border line became more prominent. That outcome was not merely the result of policies carried out on both sides of the line, but also of continuous interactions between political representatives and social actors on the ground.⁶⁵

Although the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy had all been incorporated into the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation since the Middle Ages, their history later diverged significantly. The lands around the city of Eupen belonged to the County and later Duchy of Limburg, the lands around the city of Sankt Vith were included in Luxembourgish feudatories, and Malmedy and Stavelot formed a joint independent terrain under monastic rule isolated in a forest called the High Fens (Hautes Fagnes or Hohes Venn).⁶⁶ At the time, inhabitants of the regions spoke different vernaculars. Whereas people in Eupen spoke in a German dialect close to Dutch, people in Sankt Vith used a German tongue bearing more similarities to Luxembourgish, while local inhabitants living in the vicinity of Malmedy and Stavelot spoke either that variation of Luxembourgish or a tongue referred to as Walloon, or both.⁶⁷ As was the case in Upper Silesia, vernaculars and standardised languages were used for different purposes. In the Eupen region, for example, whereas the language of state administration was Dutch (which here needs to be understood as Brabantian and be differentiated from Flemish, a dialect that will receive significant attention below), the language used in church and school was High German.⁶⁸

After the invasion of the Grand Army under the supervision of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1792, the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy-Stavelot, as part of the Rhineland, remained under French hegemony until his defeat.⁶⁹ In 1795, the Southern Netherlands, at the time under Habsburg rule, was also annexed by France. For the first time, local inhabitants, both within the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy-Stavelot and the Southern Netherlands, were confronted with authorities introducing a policy targeted at diminishing the use of vernaculars and proliferating a standardised language, in this case French, a language symbolising freedom and equality.⁷⁰

As a result of the Vienna Congress in 1815, after the defeat of Napoleon, the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were included within Prussia, with Eupen and Malmedy both as separate administrative units – the latter region being dissolved from Stavelot along the diocese border between Liège and Cologne that had run through the double Abbey since the Middle Ages, and thus creating a Walloon-speaking linguistic mi-

nority of about 12,000 speakers within Prussia – and Sankt Vith as a part of the administrative unit of Malmedy.⁷¹ Having become part of Prussia, the regions for the first time experienced the establishment of High German as the official language of administration and education. Prussian Walloons, in addition, witnessed a gradual decline in opportunities to use their vernacular in the public sphere, up to the moment when, in 1889, the language was no longer taught as a foreign language in local schools.⁷² Nine years later, a *Club Wallon* (Walloon Club) was established in Malmedy, which campaigned against excessive Germanisation and for more cultural autonomy, while at the same time swearing loyalty to the German Emperor Wilhelm II. Most of these Walloon activists merely requested an annulment of the policies launched during the *Kulturkampf*, all the while continuing to see their future within Germany. Members of the Walloon Club endorsed the idea of *la petite patrie dans la grande*; the proposition of two members to opt for an annexation by Belgium never gained wider support.⁷³ Regional loyalties did not stand in opposition to expressions of state loyalty, but instead coexisted with them. The classical processes of German state building throughout the nineteenth century, such as the bureaucratisation of the state apparatus, the democratisation of education and the foundation of a social welfare system, contributed to the people in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy coming to accept the German Empire as their state authority within a century.⁷⁴ The idea of switching to Belgian state sovereignty was barely even mooted, until that actually came to pass following the Treaty of Versailles.

The loyalty of Walloons in particular to the Prussian state and later the German Empire may be explained by the significant difference with which they were treated compared to those speaking the Silesian dialect. As the language of the great philosophers of the Enlightenment, French enjoyed considerable popularity to start with.⁷⁵ When the position of French in the social life of the linguistic minority was restricted by a series of laws, German writers pleaded for greater tolerance and for teaching in Walloon to be re-established.⁷⁶ Whereas Wallonian speakers were associated with French culture, and thus worthy of esteem, Polish and Silesian speakers were more likely to be considered a threat. The number of inhabitants speaking Polish or one of its related tongues greatly outweighed French and Walloon speakers in the German Empire. At the end of the eighteenth century, Prussia had also come to include Greater Poland and West Prussia and, as a consequence, witnessed 40 per cent of its population speaking Polish or vernaculars related to the Polish language.⁷⁷

When the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy joined Prussia in 1815, the Southern and Northern Netherlands were integrated into the United Kingdom of the Netherlands and gained pieces of land on the

western side of the Prussian border (including the towns of Welkenraedt, Boholz/Bého and Arel/Arlon), inhabited by people using a German vernacular.⁷⁸ The firm decision of King Willem I to establish the Dutch language in administration and schools and his rejection of pleas to re-introduce vernaculars affected inhabitants using the Flemish vernacular or the German vernacular spoken in these newly acquired villages at the kingdom's south-eastern border.⁷⁹

The decline in language diversity within Prussia and later the German Empire at its western border was paralleled by further developments on the other side of the Belgian-German border line. Belgium emerged as an independent state on the map of Europe in 1830 after a civil revolution, and the Great Powers approved Belgium's independence on the condition that it would operate as a neutral state, grant its citizens religious rights, and write 'the freedom of use for the languages used in Belgium' (*langues utilisées en Belgique*) into its constitution.⁸⁰ It may seem somewhat paradoxical that speakers of a German vernacular in the Belgian towns bordering the German Empire (namely, Welkenraedt, Boholz/Bého and Arel/Arlon) saw their freedom to use their language decline over time. The social reality at the time, however, was that of a Frenchified elite, a Flemish vernacular not considered to be elaborate enough to facilitate fruitful political use, and a German vernacular spoken by too few rural inhabitants to have any political weight.⁸¹ Immediately after the establishment of Belgian independence, decrees issued at a national level were translated into the German language, but this practice was halted after less than a decade. Education in German also shrank. Whereas the Belgian Kingdom of the nineteenth century legally required non-compulsory primary education to be taught in French, Dutch or German,⁸² on the verge of the First World War, education in German was taught only as a second language.⁸³ School inspector Joseph Lousberg, with whose alphabet book this monograph opened, was one of the teachers providing that education. Prior to the First World War, he taught in a primary school in Gemmenich, a village in the vicinity of Welkenraedt.⁸⁴

In this book, it will be shown how the rise of the Flemish Movement contributed to a change in the Belgian political agenda over language in the interwar years, a change also considerably affecting language learning conditions within the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmédy. In order to understand discussions within Belgium's eastern borderlands about language learning, it is therefore essential to first examine different attitudes towards language within the Belgian Kingdom throughout the late nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century.

In the first decades of Belgian independence, leading Belgian elites presented the Belgian population as being of Germanic descent while speak-

ing French in order to legitimise their country.⁸⁵ In the 1860s, under the influence of Romanticism, a new interpretation of Belgianness saw the light and would remain most influential until the 1920s.⁸⁶ The most zealous exponent of this new way of thinking, the historian Henri Pirenne, considered Belgian civilisation a synthesis of two cultures, a microcosm of Europe so to speak, and therefore urged all citizens to become bilingual. His propositions, however, were rooted in the social life of the nineteenth century and therefore addressed towards the educated Belgian bourgeoisie mostly having French as their mother tongue and wishing to expand their language base to Flemish, not German.⁸⁷ Evidently, the rural villages at Belgium's eastern border, where a German vernacular was spoken, were too few in number to be included in his cosmopolitan vision.

On the whole, the common man was not enchanted by Belgianness.⁸⁸ Historians differ in their opinions as to why the alternative Flemish nationalism developed so slowly. Lode Wils argued that the Flemish Movement arose much later than other national movements in Europe owing to early industrialisation and the fact that the fight for the emancipation of the peasants and the abolition of the ancient regime had already been concluded by the time Belgium became independent in 1830. Precisely because French rule had denationalised liberalism, the Flemish Movement was not advocated by liberal thinkers and could no longer mould social and cultural agitation into a programme that appealed to the masses.⁸⁹ Louis Vos added that the Flemish Movement was eventually pushed forward by modernisation. The fact that most state administration was conducted in French started to trouble more people when the bureaucratisation of the state increased and facilitated Frenchification. The Flemish Movement saw in universal suffrage the opportunity to increase its political power and engaged in preparing the vernacular spoken in the northern half of the country for political use.⁹⁰ Maarten Van Ginderachter, however, postulated that the pillarisation of social and cultural life along ideological profiles (mainly Catholic, socialist or liberal) might also have played a part in de-escalating linguistic tensions.⁹¹

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Flemish Movement found support among the blue-collar workers and peasants of the Catholic People's Movement. Immediately before the outbreak of the First World War, it came to see itself as a fully-fledged nation having the right to autonomy.⁹² This is also the moment when the decision was made to make the language of its cause Dutch instead of Flemish. That vernacular had interchangeably been referred to as *Vlaams* (Flemish), *Nederlands* (Dutch) or *Nederduits* (Lower German).⁹³ It became more common to speak about Flemish or Dutch after the revolution of 1848, when Belgian politicians, out of fear of French expansion, developed better cultural relationships

with the Netherlands, and after 1871, when a German Empire with expansionist ambitions was established.⁹⁴ Dutch was chosen because of the negligible scope of the Walloon movement at the end of the nineteenth century, which indicated the futility of striving for recognition of a regional language in Belgium. The struggle of the Flemish Movement led to Dutch being approved as an official administrative language of the Belgian Kingdom in 1898.⁹⁵ However, it would take until after the First World War before the Flemish Movement found sway with socialist politicians, leading to specific members of all strata of the political spectrum supporting the proliferation of its language and culture.

Thinking in Terms of Children

Throughout the Europe of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, efforts were made to establish age borders and have cohorts of children experience an increasing part of their childhood in specially designed child spaces. The European continent witnessed fervent clashes between state-building processes, based on the bourgeois notion of a national elite, and the emancipation of the nation's masses through, inter alia, a prohibition on child labour, the struggle against child mortality, and the introduction of compulsory education.⁹⁶ When the improved technology brought about by industrialisation made child labour redundant, and eventually prohibited, children's time could be devoted to new forms of socialisation.⁹⁷ What followed was a shift in the concept of childhood to the modern sense. Thanks to compulsory primary education, in the modern school, children could now be moulded to become virtuous future citizens for the state or empire.⁹⁸ Another new and separate child space became pedagogical leisure time, where the young could develop strong bodies and personalities that would foster a bright future for their societies.⁹⁹ Organised children's holidays, moreover, provided a new means of intervening in the private upbringing of children in the name of eugenic and modernist beliefs in the progress of humankind.¹⁰⁰

Whereas in both interwar Poland and Belgium, compulsory education for primary school children was only implemented after the First World War, Prussia had already singularised the *Volksschule* (primary school) as an institution of the state at the end of the eighteenth century and introduced compulsory education in the year 1819.¹⁰¹ The lens of analysis within this book is narrowed down to the child space of the modern school because when the Polish and Belgian nation-states gained state sovereignty over, respectively, Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, they came into possession of pieces of land where compul-

sory education had a long tradition. More significantly, control over education within their newly gained borderlands was considered essential for the functioning of the modern Polish and Belgian nation-states. This control offered the prospect of a common national socialisation project for all of the country's youngest citizens, including those living in the newly acquired borderlands.¹⁰²

In modern schools, pupils were to be formed through 'practices concerned with the cultural making of the citizen'.¹⁰³ In the early nineteenth century, representatives of the feudal and authoritarian Prussian regime had already issued policies aimed at increasing school attendance and establishing the learning of a standardised version of the German language. Upon German unification in 1871, universal suffrage and a constitution were initiated in order to make the German Empire appear modern and democratic, but in reality it inherited Prussia's feudal and military traditions and authoritarian way of ruling.¹⁰⁴ Launching the *Kulturkampf* within his first years in power, Otto von Bismarck aspired to unite the population of the German Empire around Protestantism and the German language. His measures affected children growing up in peripheral areas of the German Empire more than children living in more centrally located regions, since Roman Catholics accounted for a majority of the population on both the eastern and western fringes of the German Empire.¹⁰⁵

In order to limit the influence of the Catholic Church, an 1872 law uncoupled the relationship between the church and education and placed all private and public schools under state control. To foster religious tolerance, interconfessional schooling was introduced and priests were allowed to offer only classes in religion.¹⁰⁶ An 1876 law, in addition, affirmed the German language as an essential aspect of national unity and required all children to learn a standardised spelling and pronunciation in school, so as to create future citizens capable of leaving behind their regional and linguistic peculiarities. Until German unification, most children had received teaching in their vernaculars, whether these were local variants of German or otherwise.¹⁰⁷

Gradually, German became the main language of instruction in primary schools in the bilingual peripheries of the German Empire.¹⁰⁸ By 1880, teaching in languages other than German was already in decline. A decade later, Polish and French were no longer taught as a foreign language in primary schools and bilingual alphabet books fell into disuse.¹⁰⁹ In addition, pupils in the peripheries of the German Empire were no longer instructed by local teachers and priests, who left the profession in great numbers, but by newly trained teachers sent from more central locations in the German Empire.¹¹⁰ These restrictions meant that teaching in German dialects or other languages could only take place during religious in-

struction in the early years of elementary education, when children found themselves under the supervision of local clergymen. Given the absence of a private school system, language activists focused their efforts on religious instruction.¹¹¹ Their efforts remained largely in vain, since with time most children would be taught religion in German.¹¹² In Upper Silesia, this development was accelerated by a rule prescribing that in areas with a minimum of 25 per cent of inhabitants with German as their mother tongue, religion classes needed to be offered solely in German, whereas in Malmedy a petition parents signed for the preservation of Walloon in teaching was disregarded.¹¹³ Local priests did not always support the linguistic claims of parents since they prioritised the subservience of national and linguistic loyalties to the interests of the church.¹¹⁴

Despite the similarities in the educational measures targeted at pupils living in peripheral areas and speaking a tongue other than German, there are important differences to note. These differences all worked to the benefit of children living in the western part of the German Empire. To start with, the 1872 law on interconfessional schooling was implemented differently at the western and eastern edges of the German Empire. The voices of Protestant clergymen in the Rhine Province, who argued that the proliferation of their faith would suffer if Protestant children were to find themselves amidst a majority of Catholic children in school, were taken seriously.¹¹⁵ While the idea of interconfessional schooling was abolished in the west of the German Empire, in its eastern provinces, more precisely in the mixed-confessional regions of Greater Poland and West Prussia, Protestants were made school principals of what had been Catholic schools so as to facilitate the Germanisation of Polish speakers.¹¹⁶ In Upper Silesia, however, where a majority of the population belonged to the Roman Catholic Church, measures were softer in order to maintain good relations between the Catholic Church and state officials.¹¹⁷

Second, the German Empire was one of the first political entities in the world to create and designate the primary school as a space of its own. It invested massively in the erection of primary school buildings so as to disconnect schools from the parsonages where teaching had been practised before. However, whereas a sufficient number of primary school buildings had been erected in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy before the First World War, the number of school buildings erected in the eastern peripheral areas of the empire was relatively lower and German-speaking children were privileged over those speaking other languages in terms of gaining access to education in these buildings.¹¹⁸

The final difference lay in reform pedagogy, although its influence in the peripheral territories of the German Empire should not be overstated. Reform pedagogy proliferated differently across the German Em-

pire, and was characterised more by adaptability and divergence than by standardised implementations of clearly defined pedagogical methods.¹¹⁹ Teaching, which had been traditionally encyclopaedic in content and authoritarian in performance, was later enriched by Friedrich Herbart's theory of heteronomous ethics. Herbart (1774–1841), following Immanuel Kant, proclaimed that moral values existed only in activities carried out on the basis of individual feelings of duty. He emphasised the shaping of children's minds and believed that character-building and the development of an individual consciousness were to be obtained through discipline, diligence and obedience.¹²⁰

In the 1870s, psychologists discovered that the psyche of children functioned differently than that of adults. Reform pedagogues, as they came to call themselves, used this scientific insight to engage with formalist teaching methods. They suggested that the singularity of children required that teachers attain in-depth knowledge about the changing capacities of children throughout their school careers.¹²¹ Instead of assuming the submission of children to an authoritarian school system, this focus on the child became a means to bring about a nation based on the democratic principle of equality.¹²² Attention was paid to the flexibility of children's minds. Children needed to discover themselves in order to be able to do good for their society.¹²³

Some pedagogues promised to use the newest scientific insights in order to make education function as a tool to strengthen and promote German culture, an example being education through art (the *Kunsterziehungsbewegung* of Alfred Lichtwark).¹²⁴ Pedagogues who placed the interests and needs of the child centre stage (also called pedocentrists), on the other hand, were more interested in the spontaneous evolution of a child. They measured intensively under which physical, medical and other conditions children could learn best, with the aim being to establish norms on how children were to be assisted in discovering their individuality.¹²⁵ A vast array of new approaches saw the light, ranging from education through working (Georg Kerschensteiner's *Arbeitsschule*) to bringing children closer to their so-called roots (through the *Landerziehungsheimbewegung* founded by Hermann Lietz).¹²⁶ In contrast to pedocentrists, scientists in paedology (or child studies) approached the growth of a child in its entire environment, looking beyond the school, in order to study children's behaviour and development.¹²⁷ While not aspiring to change society directly, both pedocentrists and paedologists strove to conceive a more appropriate form of child socialisation.¹²⁸ Nevertheless, despite these attempts, the basic assumption underpinning their work at the turn of the century remained the idealised image of a compliant child developed under Romanticism.¹²⁹

Although no centres of reform pedagogy were established in the peripheries of the German Empire, by the mid-1870s most schools in the Rhineland, at least for a short period of time, possessed new didactic materials, such as interconfessional textbooks, before these were exchanged for textbooks especially designed either for Catholic or Protestant children.¹³⁰ In the east of the German Empire, by contrast, the pending question remained whether Polish-speaking children should receive any education at all, as the scarce school funds were first employed to accommodate the needs of German-speaking children.¹³¹

On the whole, the primary school attendance of children in the German Empire was compulsory and controlled, and buildings were specifically designed for schooling (although their number was not sufficient in the eastern part). Nevertheless, ideas of modern childhood penetrated differently in the peripheries than in more centrally located places. Pupils in the peripheries could no longer receive their education in a language other than German, most did not benefit from the insights of reform pedagogy, and the role of Catholic priests in their education was reduced to a minimum. These characteristics sharply differ from those of children growing up in the neighbouring political entities of the German Empire of relevance for this book: the Russian Empire, the Habsburg Monarchy and the Belgian Kingdom.

Within the Russian Empire, education was never made compulsory, a state of affairs that would last until 1919 when a law was introduced mandating children to attend primary school.¹³² In the Kingdom of Poland, a ban on the teaching of Polish in primary schools was introduced in 1880, which would last until 1904 when, under the influence of the war with Japan and, later, the Russian Revolution, Tsar Nicholas II allowed once more for the teaching of local languages.¹³³ In contrast to the German Empire, moreover, the Russian Empire relied on the Orthodox Church to organise primary education, which had no particular interest in spreading the Russian language.¹³⁴ As a result, in 1910 62 per cent of the inhabitants of the Russian Empire were officially illiterate, compared to 5 per cent in the German Empire.¹³⁵ However, clandestine teaching in Polish is said to have reached 33 per cent of Polish speakers in the Kingdom of Poland in the final years of the nineteenth century.¹³⁶ At around the turn of the century, Polish pedagogues, teachers, doctors and psychologists from the Kingdom of Poland started to travel to the German Empire, France and Belgium, but the insights they acquired did not percolate through to primary education.¹³⁷

In the Habsburg Empire, compulsory education had already been introduced in 1774, but this law was not enforced as effectively as it was in the German Empire.¹³⁸ After the revolutionary year of 1848, primary

schools in Galicia could offer their teaching in Polish, and, since the liberal constitution had facilitated the emergence of a political activism centralised around language demands, they gradually became places where national ideas were cultivated.¹³⁹ Herbartianism was decreed the official pedagogical method in the Habsburg Empire in the middle of the nineteenth century and enjoyed the support of the Polish-speaking gentry.¹⁴⁰ In addition, child specialists from Galicia made themselves familiar with reform pedagogy. For example, as early as the 1870s, the pedagogues Zygmunt Samolewicz (1842–1898) and Karol Benoni (1841–1904) travelled to the German Empire.¹⁴¹

Although the first Belgian primary school law of 1842 had already prescribed that every municipality must open at least one primary school, compulsory education was only decreed in 1914; given the outbreak of the First World War, this law was only implemented throughout the kingdom in 1919.¹⁴² The non-compulsory primary education on offer in the nineteenth century needed to be provided in the language preferred by the guardian of a child: Dutch, French or German.¹⁴³ Despite the fact that Flemish was the mother tongue for a majority of the inhabitants of Belgium, the country had one and a half times as many primary schools offering teaching in French as it did in Dutch or German at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁴⁴ This evolution can partly be explained by the fact the Belgian state made the Catholic Church responsible for a considerable number of the issues that the German state authorities handled. The church had no interest in investing sufficiently in the training of Dutch or German language teachers, and nor did it require that religious education take place in buildings separated from schools.¹⁴⁵

In 1879, the Liberal Party, a year after taking over from the Catholic Party in Belgium, started to implement measures similar to the ones issued in the German Empire. It turned existing Catholic municipal schools into public secular primary schools, prohibited local state authorities from subsidising religious schools, and prescribed that religious teaching must take place outside official school buildings. Liberal representatives also advocated the introduction of compulsory education.¹⁴⁶ As was the case in the German Empire, protests against these measures came from the dominant religious order. As a result, one of the sharpest Belgian political verbal disputes of the nineteenth century, commonly referred to as the School Wars (*luttes scolaires, schooloorlogen*), broke out. This led to the Catholic Episcopate feverishly establishing Catholic primary schools throughout the country, and the Liberal Party losing the elections of 1884 and finding itself in political opposition for the next twenty years.¹⁴⁷ Whereas liberal politicians had believed in a centralised organisation of education, their Catholic counterparts favoured communal autonomy.¹⁴⁸ By 1910, Catholic

schools were significantly more numerous in Flanders than in Wallonia, and covered the educational needs of 80 per cent of the children in Belgium.¹⁴⁹ Similarly, illiteracy rates were higher in Flanders than in Wallonia. While illiteracy amounted to an estimated 10 per cent for the whole country in 1910, the relative number of inhabitants incapable of reading and writing in Flanders was among the highest in Europe.¹⁵⁰

Before the First World War, pedagogy in Belgium remained in the shadow of the numerous pedagogical research initiatives and their implementation in Prussia and later the German Empire, since only ideas that did not question the authority of the teacher could be introduced.¹⁵¹ With Herbartianism on offer in public secular schools, and in an adopted form in private Catholic schools – inspired by Otto Willmann (1839–1920), who adjusted Herbart's ideas to the lifeworlds of Catholics – the teaching method was widespread in Belgium. In addition, insights into pedocentrism and paedology inspired certain Belgian pedagogues.¹⁵² The Free University in Brussels became a hub for world-class scientific paedology. In 1911, the first international conference on paedology took place in the Belgian capital.¹⁵³ The research of child psychologist Ovide Decroly, who studied in Belgium and the German Empire and concentrated on the conditions schools were to provide in order to make children act spontaneously, was especially successful in finding an international audience.¹⁵⁴ Although his experiments did not influence schooling in Belgium at large, his ideas played an important role in Belgian education politics in the interwar period.

Borderland Schooling

The Treaty of Versailles thrust imagined ideas of a peaceful Europe onto borderlands, language was foregrounded as the primary foundation of national belonging, and compulsory primary education was implemented in Poland and Belgium.¹⁵⁵ The argument developed in this book is that this thinking in terms of borderlands, language and children resulted in the elevation of borderland schools and the pupils they educated as a basic foundation of the interwar European political set-up. Language learning was used in order to prepare borderland pupils to grow into citizens able to bring about the peaceful Europe that representatives at international peace conferences had had in mind when changing the state sovereignty of the children's home grounds.

Close examination of language learning policies and practices enables us to meticulously decipher how (parts of) provinces within the German Empire were dissolved, made part of new nation-states, and over time

turned into socially lived spaces. In other words, in this book, the lens of language learning in borderland primary school education is used with the aim of unravelling and comparing how people who had inhabited peripheral areas within the German Empire lived with their new borders after the switch in state sovereignty. This process is not a teleological one of linear integration within the Polish and Belgian nation-states, but a relational one highlighting the restive interactions between borderland pupils and their caregivers (parents, teachers, pedagogues and priests), relevant institutions and historical actors within Poland or Belgium, as well as within Germany.

This book provides plenty of evidence of the often specifically targeted language learning policies launched within single nation-states in order to stabilise the state borders and reorient both the curricula of borderland schools and the feelings of belonging of borderland pupils. It will unravel how and why school curricula and the practices of borderland pupils were shaped, appropriated, changed, refuted or remained undefined. The main argument is that the schools and pupils in the two borderlands of interwar continental Europe compared in this book had enough in common to develop a profile. To that purpose, a contextual reconstruction of interwar language learning in the borderlands is offered with the help of a framework of comparison. The framework leans on the tremendous work scholars have executed over the last twenty years in order to reconsider Western modernity's fascination with the straight line, which favoured binary oppositions over multidimensional perspectives.¹⁵⁶ The framework of comparison worked out in chapter two consists of three interpretational axes and is based on an active understanding of space, a differentiated view on power and loyalties, and a comprehension of microhistory within a multilayered context.

As is the case with every other scholarly work produced by historians, the scope of this book very much depends on the accessibility of literature and sources. Inherent to comparative borderlands studies are bibliographical challenges.¹⁵⁷ For a long time, borderlands remained predominantly the domain of research for local historians, whose work found a readership in Germany, but rarely beyond.¹⁵⁸ At the same time, as questions about borderland inhabitants' past belonging were being glossed over in the Polish People's Republic, Belgian historiography was also notable for showing a general lack of interest in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmédy.¹⁵⁹ When European borderlands in the twenty-first century were included in studies about the history of Europe, the focus was primarily placed on ethnic cleansing and the repression of those adults who were considered to have been overly loyal to the former regime.¹⁶⁰ Whereas the history of twentieth-century Upper Silesia has over the last decade at-

tracted a great deal of attention from both local and international scholars publishing their studies in Polish, German, English or Czech, the scholarship on the past of the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy has yet to reach a wider audience.¹⁶¹

Moreover, whereas Silesia's past has become a laboratory for comparative research, this book is the first comparative monograph about the history of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy.¹⁶² An additional bibliographical challenge is the different focus of local historical studies. In the case of interwar language learning, for example, researchers working on Polish Upper Silesia follow the fault lines of the division of school spacing at the time and offer an analysis of either the German-speaking or the Polish-speaking school systems.¹⁶³ For the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, on the other hand, the most common publications are commemoration books published by committees of individual schools.¹⁶⁴

Researching borderlands also entails an archival challenge. Julien Fuchs pointed to the different scope of Alsatian archives, which he compared to the state archives in Paris and described as 'diffuse, dispersed and heteroclitic', but which nevertheless offered an unexpectedly 'rich body that has been hardly explored'.¹⁶⁵ It is the purpose of this study to discover the potential of local and regional sources in borderlands by analysing their content within the relevant national, bilateral, transnational and supranational contexts. To that purpose, materials were consulted in fifteen different archives in Poland, Belgium and Germany. The local and regional source base is more voluminous in the case of Polish Upper Silesia than in the case of the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy for several reasons. Not only was Polish Upper Silesia larger in size, it also operated as a distinct political entity within the Polish state for the entire interwar period and generated administrative paperwork about the border region and its districts. In addition, sources in Polish Upper Silesia had a good chance of making it through the Second World War, whereas the French-speaking school of Eupen, for example, was set on fire during the German invasion in 1940, and Sankt Vith and Malmedy were bombed during Hitler's last offensive in the winter of 1944–1945. Of great significance for the research on the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy turned out to be the city archives of Eupen, as well as local press articles from the time.

In contrast to Julien Fuchs' experience in France, interwar sources produced at a national level, both in Poland and Belgium, turned out to be disappointingly meagre. Whereas it is common knowledge that the sources produced within interwar Polish ministries are scarce because Warsaw lay in ruins at the end of the Second World War, it came as a surprise that the archives of Belgian governmental cabinets, as well as the

Belgian Ministry of Education, were practically non-existent.¹⁶⁶ In much better condition were German archives reporting on the institutions and historical actors involved in transnational contacts with borderland inhabitants, both across its eastern and western borders, such as the German School Association (*Deutscher Schulverein*) in the case of Polish Upper Silesia, and the archival fund of Franz Thedieck, the Special Consultant of the German Reich's Home Office, for the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy throughout the 1930s. Diplomatic archives in Brussels, Warsaw and Berlin also yielded a better insight into language learning in both case study borderlands. It was possible to include the supranational level into this study owing to a comparison of the empirical findings in local, regional and national archives with the published sources of the Mixed Commission established to supervise the implementation of the Geneva Convention (1922–1937) in Polish Upper Silesia.¹⁶⁷

Given these bibliographical and archival realities, the initial focus of the research on borderland children was shifted to one child space: the modern primary school. The modern school was preferred to other child spaces of modernity, such as youth organisations or children's treatment camps, owing to the fact that compulsory primary education was implemented in both Poland and Belgium in the aftermath of the First World War, thus facilitating a systematic comparison. Not only did that implementation put the modern primary school at the centre of the political agenda, but the question of how children were to learn languages in their schools was also a topic of public debate during the interwar period. The scope of a study focusing on other child spaces of modernity would have been less comprehensive. Not only was the network of youth organisations in Polish Upper Silesia weak, but the local archival sources also offered hardly any materials beyond membership lists.¹⁶⁸ In the case of the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, national and transnational interest in local youth organisations only started with the importation of the Belgian scout movement in 1934 and the emergence of new youth organisations receiving inspiration or support from organisations in Nazi Germany.¹⁶⁹ The decision to exclude from this study the history of German treatment camps for borderland children from Poland and Belgium was taken upon discovery that archival documentation on the Polish-German case in the Political Archive of the German Federal Foreign Office offered correspondence only until 1934.¹⁷⁰ Whereas these documents had been archived outside Berlin at the time the city was bombed, documents created in the second half of the 1930s were still held in Berlin and did not survive the Second World War. Given the fact that children's transports from the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy began only in 1925 (unlike in Polish Upper Silesia, where they began in 1923), the comparison could

have offered an interesting story, but would not have covered how the borderlands dissolved from Germany and grew into socially lived spaces throughout the interwar years.

Archival realities also resulted in this book becoming much more a contribution to research on what adults said about children than on what children said about themselves. At the centre of current developments within childhood studies is the fact that children are not only 'human beings' but also 'human doings'.¹⁷¹ This observation has long been neglected since children were not thought to be rational, which is still at the heart of many historians' definition of a social actor.¹⁷² While historians of childhood remain aware of the methodological challenges in finding out how children viewed their treatment by adults, how they articulated this experience in their own practices, and how they recall it in sources, they point at the potential of including different voices in our understanding of the past.¹⁷³ Indeed, children not only experienced situations differently from adults, they often also faced other horizons of opportunities.¹⁷⁴

The ego documents of borderlands children traced back in the archives do, however, have a different scope than the ego documents historians in childhood studies usually consult. Whereas collections of child sources were often gathered at a national level by nation-state representatives and international or welfare organisations, in the case study borderlands where state sovereignty switched back and forth several times throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century, such collections were never gathered.¹⁷⁵ David Oswell acknowledged that 'children's capacities to speak, act and become' are 'disclosed in particular social, natural and technological contexts'.¹⁷⁶ Borderlands formed specific places where children's involvement with their everyday lives often took on a different dimension. Scholars have already pointed to the fact that in borderlands stably conceived orders of knowledge are often lacking, as is a normative consensus on the kinds of actions that are considered legitimate.¹⁷⁷ As a consequence, everyday practices in borderlands remain marked by discontinuities, uncertainties and ambivalences; in the case of this study, this has resulted in a scarcity of borderland child ego sources.¹⁷⁸

This scarcity led to a focus on one child space of modernity, rather than a delineation of age cohorts and a display of their experiences in different spaces for a specific relevant time period.¹⁷⁹ It also limited the acquisition of a deep insight into borderland girlhood. Just as childhood policies reflected different ideals for boys and girls, so too are the ways such policies were experienced and articulated gender-specific. For a long time, girls had few opportunities to express themselves publicly, few wrote down their experiences, and even fewer of these writings have survived the rigours of time. Those spoken of most commonly belonged to the elite or

were problematised.¹⁸⁰ Throughout this book, I will point out when borderland girlhood was reported and reported itself as specific.

A Comparison of Borderlands

A vast majority of the scholarship on borderlands in Europe consists of single case studies, and the historians writing these analyses have a tendency to state that the borderlands they study followed a unique path through the past, a phenomenon in German referred to as a *Sonderweg*.¹⁸¹ The most evident observation made while researching the practices of inhabitants from different borderlands has been that they were as manifold as the nationalisms and regionalisms operating throughout the European continent.¹⁸² In systematically comparing the two case study borderlands, this book aims to provide a deeper understanding and explanation of the development of historical events.¹⁸³ John H. Elliott indeed once said: ‘above all a comparative approach forces us to reconsider our assumptions about the uniqueness of our own historical explanation’.¹⁸⁴

The systematic comparison of borderland pupils in two local case study borderlands in this book uses a newly developed framework of comparison going beyond simple binary oppositions such as structures versus agents, and allows for the investigation of the interrelationship between both categories, as well as of microhistorical developments within their regional, national, bilateral, transnational and supranational contexts. This framework helps us to critically reconsider arguments hitherto employed in historiography, and to come to see that borderland schools held enough characteristics in common to distil a profile.¹⁸⁵

Within comparative history, two approaches are employed. The first is mainly occupied with finding differences between the cases under comparison with the purpose of arriving at a more precise comprehension of the peculiarities of one case, and the way in which these are distinct from the other. The second approach foregrounds the search for commonalities in order to arrive at an understanding of the universality of historical phenomena.¹⁸⁶ The research presented in this book connects both approaches. Although the distillation of a profile of borderland schools is placed at the centre of this book’s narrative, the study uses the potential of the comparative method in order to make historical particularities within single case studies more visible, as well as to show what other historical paths in a border region could have been possible.¹⁸⁷ The careful balancing act between both approaches was not carried out prior to the empirical research, but during the analysis of the archival materials systematically gathered for Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy.

In times when the cross-border interactions between historical agents and transfers of ideas are elevated to the centre of historical analyses, comparative history is blamed for its preoccupation with macro-historical structures.¹⁸⁸ This symmetrical comparative study is, however, also a transnational history. Although there is a tension between the comparative and transnational perspective, as comparativists separate phenomena whereas their colleagues stress transfers, a small group of mainly German historians have pointed to the innovation that a combined complementary approach can bring to the progress of knowledge.¹⁸⁹ Borderland pupils in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy all had a state border with Germany, and Germans did not cease to show their interest in the people they considered to have been left behind after the reshuffling of state sovereignties. This interest manifested itself in multiple ways, ranging from the sending of schoolbooks or money, the spreading of reform pedagogical ideas, the welcoming of schoolchildren from across the border in Germany, the outmigration of German priests across Germany's western border, to cross-border family visits.¹⁹⁰

There were many reasons behind the decision to make a symmetrical comparison of borderland pupils' past in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy throughout the interwar period. Mainly, I wanted to assess the way in which supranational involvement was established and how it influenced the life of borderland inhabitants. I therefore felt the need to include one case study from Central Europe and one case study from Western Europe. Of the five peace treaties signed in France in 1919, only the Treaty of Versailles also covered territorial changes in Western Europe. After the First World War, Germany lost areas of land to France (Alsace-Lorraine), Belgium (Eupen-Malmedy), Denmark (Northern Schleswig), Lithuania (the Memel region), Poland (parts of Posen, West-Prussia, East Prussia and East Upper Silesia) and Czechoslovakia (the Hlučín region).

Second, Belgium turned out to be an interesting case because it was founded in 1830 as one of the most progressive countries in the world. With its constitution guaranteeing the freedom of religion and the practice of languages, the Belgian Kingdom offered its inhabitants an alternative protective system to the supranational framework of control functioning under the auspices of the League of Nations. This was especially the case after 1933, when Germany left the League of Nations and Poland no longer fully respected its conditions. We will see in this book that the Belgian democratic regime appeared better capable of encompassing the diversity of its inhabitants than that supranational system.

Third, I opted for a borderland included in interwar Poland over one that joined Czechoslovakia or Lithuania because compulsory education

and universal suffrage were introduced in Poland and Belgium at the same time. Whereas mass education and mass voting had already been established in Prussia in the nineteenth century, these measures were only implemented in Poland and Belgium after the end of the First World War.¹⁹¹

My fourth decision followed from the characteristics of the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy. Since these were practically entirely Catholic regions, I selected a border region in Poland with a predominantly Catholic profile as well.¹⁹² For this reason, the border region of Polish Upper Silesia became an obvious choice, and not the regions inhabited predominantly or to a considerable extent by Protestants: East Prussia, West Prussia and the Posen region.¹⁹³

The fifth and final selective criterion was the characteristics of the land. Since the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy are covered with woods and agricultural lands, I decided to narrow my analysis of Polish Upper Silesia down to its most rural area, the Lubliniec district, with its relatively comparable size (whereas the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy covered 1,052,92 km², the Lubliniec district covered 700km²) and number of inhabitants (approximately 60,000 in 1920 and 64,306 in 1940 in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy versus 45,232 in the Lubliniec district in 1931 and 50,518 in 1938).¹⁹⁴ These overall features distinguished the Lubliniec district from other districts in Polish Upper Silesia, where the cities were more densely populated, more industrialised, more religiously diverse, and the inhabitants were, relatively speaking, more educated.¹⁹⁵

Despite the similar features of the Lubliniec district in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, there are important differences to highlight. Industrialisation affected these regions distinctively to begin with. Industrialisation of the Eifel region had begun at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but always remained in the shadow of the prime industrial area of the Rhineland, and after 1870 did not participate in the increasing wealth Western Europe enjoyed because of its specialisation in a deteriorating branch of industry: textiles.¹⁹⁶ As a result, the region suffered continuous outmigration.¹⁹⁷ By contrast, in Upper Silesia, industrialisation started later, but the region became an industrial powerhouse on a global scale in the second half of the nineteenth century, producing almost a quarter of the German Empire's coal at the outbreak of the First World War. The circulation of its labour force was caused by the fact that the average income was lower than in other industrialised places within the German Empire, owing to which specialised workers moved out, and workers from poorer areas, such as the Posen region, moved in.¹⁹⁸

After Upper Silesia was divided in 1922, Polish Upper Silesia lost some of its competitiveness and became poorer than neighbouring German

Upper Silesia.¹⁹⁹ By contrast, the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy became relatively more affluent than the other parts of the former Aachen district to which they had belonged before the First World War. The global crisis reduced but did not obliterate that difference.²⁰⁰ Interestingly, these different economic situations did not lead to significantly different migration flows during the interwar years. In both regions, a significant number of local inhabitants (especially former civil servants) moved to Germany immediately after the switch of sovereignty, whereas later outmigration slowed down.²⁰¹

The second difference is in demography. Poland experienced a significantly bigger baby boom than Germany, in contrast to Belgium, where birth rates decreased.²⁰² Whereas the increasing number of children put pressure on school structures in Poland, the phenomenon took a slightly different form in Polish Upper Silesia, where, as we will see in chapter four, the school building shortage was tackled more effectively than anywhere else in interwar Poland, without actually being solved.²⁰³ In Belgium, by contrast, providing school buildings for a decreasing number of children in an age of mass education was not a major problem most of the time, although, as chapter four will illustrate, it did play a role in the multilingual city of Brussels.²⁰⁴

Outline of the Book

In order to situate how certain child policies developed during the First World War continued to shape the systems of power applicable to Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy once these borderlands had switched state sovereignty, chapter one describes in detail the primary education, language learning and experiences of children during the war. Although in the states, nations and empires relevant for the two case studies there are many differences in the ways in which child policies continued or changed under the conditions of war, and many differences in the ways in which children experienced that war inside and outside their classrooms, the First World War constituted a turning point for all of them. In the German Empire, including at its eastern and western fringes, the war caused a wider acceptance of reform pedagogy. However, whereas in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, children witnessed the war from close up as soldiers marched west and east over the prewar Belgian-German state border line, in Upper Silesia, the war remained merely an event taking place somewhere else, until a civil war broke out with the three armed uprisings of 1919, 1920 and 1921. In Belgium, on the other hand, the war resulted in a programme of civic educa-

tion for the masses, for the first time in the history of the country. It also, however, put to the test the freedom of guardians to choose the language of their children's school instruction. In the newly established Kingdom of Poland, it was the shaping of a Polish child, along with discussions about the language(s) he or she was to speak, that was foregrounded in the new era of compulsory education.

With the aim of analysing the dissolution of the system of power that had characterised the German Empire and its reconfiguration in different systems of power after the switch in state sovereignty following the war, a fully-fledged framework of comparison is provided in chapter two.²⁰⁵ The framework indicates routes for comparing and bridging the available knowledge in historiography, as well as the author's new research findings for the history of primary schools and their pupils in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy in the interwar years. Originally a concept developed in order to approach more accurately the new spatiality of politics brought about by the processes of globalisation in the post-Cold War era, the concept of the borderscape also presented itself as a suitable lens through which to approach bordering processes in Europe's past. Although interdisciplinary border scholars did not neglect historical dimensions, they left them underdeveloped.²⁰⁶ For this study, it was considered necessary to include the concept of the borderscape in a framework of comparison combining three axes of analysis – border and human territoriality, power/multiple loyalties, and microhistory within a multilayered context – in order to shed light on the historical contingency of language learning in the two case study borderlands and support the development of a profile of borderland schools.

Since language had become the defining denominator of national belonging at the time, the book then unravels the changing systems of power through the perspective of language learning in primary schools. When 'the Paris Peace Conference sought to apply the principle [of self-determination] in Central and Eastern Europe', John Kulczycki wrote, 'language stood for nationality'.²⁰⁷ International players stopped applying this equation when setting borders in 1923 because they understood that language was just as imagined a concept as the nation; the lines of linguistic division could be drawn wherever one wanted.²⁰⁸ In Upper Silesia, however, people lived with the consequences of this illusion throughout the entire interwar period. Meanwhile, in Belgium, as will be shown, disputes between nationalists about the use of languages spoken within the country also coloured the political agenda.

When the Polish and Belgian nation-states received sovereignty over, respectively, Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, education was considered to be inextricably linked with

language. For this reason, mass education and teaching in the mother tongue of primary schoolchildren were implemented simultaneously in both Poland and Belgium. Establishing and maintaining control over education was crucial for the functioning of the modern nation-state, since it offered the prospect of a common national socialisation for its youngest citizens. A mass education system could socialise children using a single curriculum and teach them a common standardised language.²⁰⁹

The systems of power carved out in the Polish and Belgian borderlands throughout the interwar period are reconstructed in three subsequent chapters. In chapter three, it is shown how during the first time period (1919–1925) language learning in primary schools played a crucial role in transforming what had been spots on a map of Europe on the negotiation table in Paris into lived social spaces. By means of a processual understanding of borders and a relational approach towards the human-made creation and functioning of borders, chapter three goes beyond the drawing of the state border line in order to unravel how the development and implementation of rules governing language learning in borderland primary schools functioned as an essential means of making the border. In Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, the measures put forward to appease the tensions of multilingualism were surprisingly similar. The unitary school system offering teaching in German was replaced by two sorts of primary schools offering teaching in two different languages. In this way, public space could be differentiated, and children separated according to their supposed vernacular. Given the existence of a dispute settlement network for Polish Upper Silesia set up under the supranational control of the League of Nations, various state institutions pleaded their case in public, with their grievances being preserved in great detail. The administrative entity of Eupen-Malmedy, however, took the shape of a curious blend of colonial rule enriched with some of the principles of freedom that characterised the Belgian Kingdom, where inhabitants were subject to a latent form of censorship, and there was no transnational control over the way in which their pupils were treated.

In chapter four it is shown how during the second time period (1926–1932) spaces changed from areas where the demonstration of power took the form of domination or prevention, through school policies for borderland pupils, to socially lived and networked spaces, through an interplay between state institutions, on the one hand, and parents, teachers, children and clergymen, on the other. This change was driven by the desire of borderland inhabitants to acquire as much autonomy as possible. As a result, Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy became the settings for battles over schools, teaching branches, textbooks, language exams, school curricula, ideas on education and styles

of teaching, leading to a circulation of social divisions within networks that spread out beyond these physical borderlands. These battles exposed the contradictions and inconsistencies in existing systems of power not only in the borderlands, but also in Poland, Germany, Belgium and the League of Nations. In the event, these contradictions and inconsistencies proved impossible to overcome. At the start of the 1930s, the quest that had involved and obsessed so many people – to give meaning to the state border line by means of borderland primary school education – resulted in a collapse of meaning for borderland inhabitants. Rather than seeing this as a specific development for Polish Upper Silesia – as has been done in existing historiography – the chapter shows how a similar fate befell the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy. Furthermore, it is argued that what happened, following the notion of human territoriality understood in the sense of the social geographer Claudes Raffestin, was precisely what could have been expected given the specific resources of the relevant systems of power at the time.

The final chapter covers the period between 1932 and the outbreak of the Second World War, comparing how the various ideas on universal childhood articulated at different levels of decision-making on the European continent interplayed in the policies towards borderland pupils, and their experiences of these policies, in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy. By this time, Polish and Belgian statesmen had come to recognise that a universal childhood required more than the issuing of laws on compulsory education. This was also a time when the case study borderlands had ceased to play a crucial role in international politics themselves, becoming pawns in a geopolitical game about the future reshuffling of the European continent. Whereas Belgian politicians worked out a highly differentiated system of legal prevention of conflicts over language learning in primary education that went far beyond the protection the League of Nations had been able to offer, Polish politicians and scientists developed an obsession with reform pedagogy that was to improve the conditions of learning for borderland children, with Polish Upper Silesia becoming a laboratory of innovative reform pedagogical experiments and studies. Meanwhile, in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, the Roman Catholic Church was highly effective in (although not entirely capable of) blocking the use of reform pedagogy. Both pedagogical innovation and its complete rejection were indeed possible paths in the interwar years, and they could even co-exist within one country. Later, similarities in the transnational pedagogical materials sent from Germany for the education of borderland pupils in both case study borderlands are uncovered and compared. The chapter ends with an illustration and explanation of the way in which the system of power

applicable to Polish Upper Silesia changed more profoundly than the one pertaining to the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy during the acceleration of authoritarianism at the brink of the Second World War.

Finally, the conclusion submits that going to school in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy was, and continued to be, a significantly different experience than going to school elsewhere in, respectively, Poland and Belgium throughout the entire interwar period. Despite the differences in the continuously changing systems of power in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, interwar borderland pupils had enough in common for us to be able to develop a profile consisting of four characteristics: borderland schools were more dependent on international and transnational changes; borderland schools encountered specifically designed (language learning) policies; (language learning) policy measures were more negotiable within the borderlands; and pupils in borderland schools experienced at first hand the excesses within changing systems of power.

Notes

1. Lousberg, *Fibel oder Lesebüchlein*.
2. Staatsarchiv Eupen (SE), 657/55/147 (Hauptschulinspektor über Fibel von Herrn Inspektor Lousberg, 1930 or 1931).
3. Lejeune, Toussaint and Pauquet, 'Grenzland seit Menschengedenken', 118; Wintgens, 'Inspektor', 35–37; Schmitz-Reiners, 'Deutsche Schule Antwerpen'.
4. Lousberg, *Fibel oder Lesebüchlein*, 14.
5. Wintgens, 'Inspektor', 35.
6. SE, 657/55/147 (Hauptschulinspektor über Fibel von Herrn Inspektor Lousberg, 1929).
7. SE, 657/55/147 (Urteil eines hervorragenden rheinischen Methodikers über die Fibel des belgischen Schulinspektors Lousberg, 1929).
8. Ibid.
9. See Georg Schmidt-Rohr, 'Religion und Muttersprache', *Deutsche Schulzeitung* 1933–1934, 17. *Deutsche Schulzeitung* was published by the Association of German Teachers in Poland.
10. Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 903.
11. Sanborn, *Imperial Apocalypse*, 236; Vladimir Lenin wrote 'The Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination' in late 1915 and 'The Socialist Revolution and the Rights of Nations to Self-Determination' in April 1916; see Chernev, 'Brest', 2011, 370–71.
12. Leonhard, *Frieden*, 96–104.
13. Wheeler-Bennett, *Forgotten Peace*, 268.
14. Gerwarth, *Vanquished*, 12.
15. The Treaty of Versailles was one of five international post-First World War Treaties that prepared the shape of interwar Europe's state borders. The Treaty of Versailles regu-

- lated the borders with Germany, the Treaty of St Germain with Austria, the Treaty of Neuilly with Bulgaria, the Treaty of Trianon with Hungary, and the Treaty of Sèvres with the Ottoman Empire (or the Big Three, when Italy temporarily pulled out of the negotiations to the Treaty of Versailles).
16. Clemenceau, *Grandeur*, 166 and 170.
 17. Martel, 'A Comment', 623.
 18. Cattaruzza and Langewiesche, 'Introduction', 4.
 19. Sonnino as quoted in Spector, *Rumania*, 243.
 20. Macmillan, *Paris 1919*, 493. Despite their aspirations, Vietnamese, Iranian, Syrian and Armenian nationalists and others were refused representation during the peace talks. Dealing with disputed territories beyond Europe, the decision makers reverted to old imperialist habits: they assigned pieces of land.
 21. Mishkova and Trencsényi, 'Introduction', 9; Macmillan, *Paris 1919*, 221; Harley, *New Nature*.
 22. Langewiesche, *Nation*, 16.
 23. Anderson, 'Geopolitics', 127.
 24. Kamusella, 'Language', 237.
 25. Mishkova and Trencsényi, 'Introduction', 9; Macmillan, *Paris 1919*, 221; Harley, *New Nature*.
 26. Leonhard, *Frieden*, 718ff.
 27. Sanborn, *Imperial Apocalypse*, 237.
 28. Gerwarth, *Vanquished*, 4–5.
 29. Wandycz, *France*, 131.
 30. Chlebowczyk, *Nad Olzą*.
 31. See Conze, *Illusion*; Leonhard, *Frieden*.
 32. As quoted in Reynaud, *Mémoires*, 457.
 33. Berg, *Woodrow Wilson*, 182.
 34. *Ibid.*, 188ff.
 35. Macmillan, *Paris 1919*, 465.
 36. *Ibid.*, 482.
 37. Kolb, *Weimarer*, 184 and 189.
 38. Mazower, 'Minorities', 50.
 39. *Ibid.*, 51; Fink, *Defending*, 264.
 40. For a discussion on the Polish Minority Treaty, see Fink, *Defending*, 237–64.
 41. Wilson associated self-determination with democratic self-governance. Only when inhabitants of a region were considered capable of governing themselves could they be granted independence. This reduced the assignment of national self-determination to former imperial territories on the European continent (Leonhard, *Frieden*, 708–18). Despite their aspirations, nationalists from other continents, such as the Vietnamese, Iranians, Syrians and Armenians, were refused representation (Mishra, *Ruins*, 187–93).
 42. Marks, *Innocent*, 153.
 43. Macmillan, *Paris 1919*, 278.
 44. Doepgen, *Abtretung*, 5; Mazower, 'Minorities', 56.
 45. Article 34 of the Versailles Treaty, as cited in Brüll and Kontny, *Eupen-Malmedy im europäischen Vergleich*, 50.
 46. Von Hirschhausen and Leonhard, 'Europäische Nationalismen', 15.
 47. Gerwarth, *Vanquished*, 14.
 48. Polak-Springer, *Recovered*, 15.
 49. Bonfiglio, 'Inventing the Native Speaker', 54.
 50. Hobsbawm, *Nations*, 22–23 and 97.

51. Kamusella, *Politics*, 239.
52. Kulczycki, *Belonging*, 10.
53. Dieckhoff, *Invention of a Nation*, 101.
54. Müller and Torp, 'Conceptualising', 611–12.
55. Di Fiore, 'Production of Borders', 48.
56. Žáček, 'Górny Śląsk'; Čapský, 'Górny Śląsk w okresie późnego średniowiecza'.
57. Kamusella, *Creole*, 144–51; Gellner, *Nations*, 11. There is an ongoing debate on whether Silesian is a separate language. The solution offered in the Silesian Museum in Katowice in 2016 was to consider Silesian as a spoken language, but not a standardised written language. Visitors were offered written explanations in Polish, German and English, with oral explanations also available in Silesian.
58. Bjork et al., 'Introduction', 1.
59. Struve, 'Erfahrung', 141.
60. Bjork, 'Monoglot Norms', 122. See also Bjork et al., 'Introduction', 1; Kaczmarek, 'Zwischen Regionalismus', 164–86; Michalczyk, *Heimat*, 17.
61. Wilson, *Frontiers*, 214.
62. Schmidt-Rösler, 'Autonomie', 11; Jerczyński, *Historia*; Alexander, 'Oberschlesien', 465–89.
63. Wilson, *Frontiers*, 69.
64. Kamusella, 'Isomorphism', 57–92. On imagined communities see Anderson, *Imagined*.
65. Di Fiore, 'Production of Borders', 36.
66. Pabst, 'Eupen-Malmedy', 221–23.
67. Pabst, 'Politische Geschichte', 11.
68. Möller, 'Im Zeitalter der Nationalsprachen', 232.
69. Van Banning, *Gebiedsovergang*, 27ff.
70. Möller, 'Im Zeitalter der Nationalsprachen', 234; Willemyns and Vandenbussche, 'De standaardisering', 637.
71. Pabst, 'Politische Geschichte', 11.
72. Giesdorf, Lindig and Brüll, 'Die beständige Suche nach Heimaten', 132–33.
73. *Ibid.*, 133. See also Legros, *La Wallonie*.
74. Scharte and Liemann, 'Auf dem Weg zu Nation und Nationalismus', 43; Scharte, 'Die Verwaltung des Alltags', 89.
75. Herrmann, 'Schulen', 253.
76. Balace, 'Belgien', 95. In Alsace, such support was more substantial than in the small region of Malmedy. Alsace was reported to be a mainly French-speaking region upon its annexation in 1875. While policymakers initially attempted to erase French from the primary school curriculum, under pressure from Francophile inhabitants within the German Empire they later developed a liberal language policy for Alsatian schools. In Lorraine, by contrast, where only one-third of the population was reported to speak French, children were to speak standardised German (Rimmele, *Sprachenpolitik*, 17 and 161–62).
77. Kamusella, *Politics*, 375.
78. Möller, 'Im Zeitalter der Nationalsprachen', 236–37.
79. *Ibid.*, 238.
80. *Belgique. Constitution du 7 février 1831*, Article 23; Pabst, 'Eupen-Malmedy', 346.
81. Willemyns and Vandenbussche, 'De standaardisering', 638.
82. Mallinson, *Power*, 33 and 60.
83. Bischoff, *Die deutsche Sprache in Belgien*, 11; Möller, 'Im Zeitalter der Nationalsprachen', 234.
84. I could not find quantitative data on the number of teachers offering courses in German-speaking villages close to the German border. We do know that in 1906 only

- 11 out of the 28 policemen employed in Arel/Arlon knew German (Bischoff, *Die deutsche Sprache in Belgien*, 40).
85. Beyen, 'Belgium', 242, 247 and 352; Vos, 'Van België', 91.
 86. Beyen, 'Belgium', 348.
 87. Lejeune, *Die Deutsch-Belgischen Kulturbeziehungen*, 23–25.
 88. Beyen, 'Belgium', 348.
 89. Wils, *Vlaanderen*, 226 and 456.
 90. Vos, 'Van België', 93.
 91. Van Ginderachter, 'Nationale onverschilligheid', 212; Van Ginderachter, *The Everyday Nationalism*, x.
 92. Wils, *Vlaanderen*, 97; Vos, 'Van België', 91.
 93. Elias, *Vlaamse gedachte*, 217 and 318.
 94. *Ibid.*, 166 and 319.
 95. Mallinson, *Power*, 33.
 96. Fass, *History of Childhood*; Hindman, 'Child Labor', 45–48; Fyfe, 'Historical Role of Education', 49–52.
 97. Prussia was the first political entity in the world to prohibit industrial labour for children under the age of nine (and to approve working conditions for older children) (Kastner, *Kinderarbeit im Rheinland*). Similar measures were later taken in the Habsburg Monarchy (1859), the Russian Empire (1882), Belgium (1889), and within the newly independent Polish state (1919) (Gorshkov, *Factory Children*, 93; Beneš, 'Labour'; Verman-dere, *We zijn goed aangekomen!*, 22; Bouverne-De Bie, 'De pedagogisering', 1–4; *Dziennik Ustaw*, 1921, Item 44, Position 267.
 98. Tröhler, Popkewitz and Labaree, 'Introduction', 13–14.
 99. Depaepe, *De pedagogisering achterna*, 146.
 100. Marissal, *Protéger le jeune enfant*, 33.
 101. Lamberti, *State*, 13.
 102. Gellner, *Nations*, 27.
 103. Tröhler, Popkewitz and Labaree, 'Introduction', 5.
 104. Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 879, 888 and 903.
 105. For example, in one district of Upper Silesia, the Lublinitz district, 94.3 per cent of the 43,428 people living there at the time were Roman Catholics. In the regions of Eupen, Malmedy and Montjoie (which was split after the First World War, when the city of Sankt Vith and its vicinities changed to Belgian sovereignty), the percentage of Roman Catholics among the 75,038 inhabitants lay between 95.5 and 99.1 per cent (Königliches Statistisches Bureau in Berlin, 1883, LXXXIII, LXXXV. On the number of inhabitants, *ibid.* 258–59).
 106. Lamberti, *State*, 212; Lejeune, 'Abtretung', 236; Mächler, 'Volksschulpolitik', 234.
 107. Kamusella, *Politics*, 403.
 108. In the 1880 census, inhabitants from the German Empire were not asked to indicate their mother tongue, but data gathered in 1911 showed that of the 2,015 primary school children in the Lublinitz district of Upper Silesia living in cities, 504 were reported as speaking German at home, 946 Polish, and 565 both languages. In addition, of the 9,525 children living in the countryside, 323 were reported as speaking German at home, 8,822 Polish, and 334 both languages. In the districts of Eupen and Monjoie, all children were reported as speaking German at home. Of the 1,089 children living in the city of Malmedy, 482 were reported as speaking German, 581 Walloon, and 26 both languages. In the countryside of the Malmedy district, Prussian administrators counted 3,755 German speakers, 880 Walloon speakers, and 114 bilingual children (Königliches Statistisches Bureau in Berlin, 1912, 387).

109. Kamusella, *Politics*, 403; Pabst, 'Eupen-Malmedy', 272–73; Molenda, 'Children and Youth', 161–84.
110. Korth, *Preußische Schulpolitik*, 16ff.; Pabst, 'Eupen-Malmedy', 271.
111. Bjork, *Neither German*, 24; Pabst, 'Eupen-Malmedy', 272–73.
112. Korzeniowska, 'Historia', 69; Pabst, 'Eupen-Malmedy', 272–73.
113. Bjork, *Neither German*, 62; van Banning, *Gebiedsovergang*, 32–33.
114. Gierretz, 'Die Entwicklung des Volksschulunterrichtes', 23. In Upper Silesia, for example, the Roman Catholic Bishop Kopp asked the Prussian Minister of Education in 1890 to establish an additional hour of religious instruction, claiming that there was an insufficient knowledge of the German language among local children, while endeavouring to increase the amount of religious teaching (Bjork, *Neither German*, 66–67).
115. Herrmann, 'Schulen', 182.
116. Lamberti, *State*, 213; Liemann, 'Soziale Inklusion durch Krieg?', 303.
117. Rimmele, *Sprachenpolitik*, 85ff.
118. Hennen and Knauf, *Templerkloster*, 30; Rimmele, *Sprachenpolitik*, 104–5.
119. Herrmann, 'Schulen', 210.
120. Herrmann, 'Pädagogisches Denken', 156.
121. Sandin, 'Education', 20.
122. Tröhler, Popkewitz and Labaree, 'Introduction', 19.
123. *Ibid.*, 'Preface', XII.
124. Berg and Herrmann, 'Einleitung', 23.
125. Sobczak, *Nowe wychowanie*, 9.
126. Benner and Kemper, *Reformpädagogik*, 136, 165, 238 and 268.
127. Depaepe, 'De pedagogiek', 336.
128. Kabzińska, 'Dziecko jako przedmiot', 23.
129. Berg, 'Familie', 120; Depaepe, 'De pedagogiek', 335.
130. Herrmann, 'Pädagogisches Denken', 150; Blumenthal, 'Unterrichtsmethoden', 185, 189 and 191.
131. Rimmele, *Sprachenpolitik*, 104–5.
132. Woodin, McCulloch and Cowan, *School-Leaving Age*, 21–22.
133. By 1880, the Kingdom of Poland, re-created in 1815 at the Congress of Vienna, had lost the autonomy it previously enjoyed within the Russian Empire, but was still referred to under this historical name.
134. Kamusella, *Politics*, 388 and 393.
135. Charriaux, *La Belgique moderne*, 127.
136. Miąso, 'Educational Policy', 166.
137. Jan Władysław Dawid (1859–1914) sent out the first pedagogical survey and showed that, along with innate talent and instinct, it was the school environment in which children grew up that determined the development of their minds (Kabzińska, 'Dziecko jako przedmiot', 36). His collaborator Aniela Szyćówna (1869–1921) wrote the first textbook on paedology in Polish and founded the Association for Research on Children (Towarzystwo Badań nad Dziećmi) in 1907 (Szyćówna, *Pedologia*). Józefa Joteyko (1866–1928), who grew up in Warsaw, studied experimental psychology at the University of Brussels, and became the director of the International Faculty of Paedology there. She would move to the new Polish independent state in 1919 (Dzierzbicka, 'System O'; Konarski, 'Joteykówna Józefa Franciszka', 297–300; Sobczak, *Nowe wychowanie*, 67–68). Under her leadership, the Polish psychologist Maria Lipska-Librachowa (1878–1955) and the pedagogue Maria Grzegorzewska (1888–1967) obtained PhD degrees at that faculty, after which they also opted for a life in the new Polish Republic (Michalski, *Marii Lipskiej-Librachowej*, 23; Sobecki, *Janusz Korczak*, 9; Wnęk, *Dziecko w polskiej literaturze naukowej*, 9).

138. Scott, 'Reform', 145–87. In 1910, illiteracy was reported to still amount to 41 per cent of the population (Glimos-Nadgórska, *Polskie szkolnictwo*, 76).
139. Dutkowa, *Polityka szkolna w Galicji*, 165; Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*, 9 and 12–13; Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*, 67. The number of Galician primary schools offering teaching in Polish rose from 2,467 in 1868 to 5,950 in 1913 (Juško, *Rada Szkolna Krajowa*, 244). Secondary school education in Polish was installed after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867. In the following years, even the universities of Krakow and Lwów started to offer instruction in Polish (Kamusella, *Politics*, 390–94).
140. Majorek, 'Herbartyzm', 25. However, because the standard work of Johann Friedrich Herbart – *Allgemeine Pädagogik* (General Pedagogy) – was only translated into Polish in 1912, teachers mainly learned about him through decrees and encyclopaedias, which led to prejudicial interpretations (Dybiec, *Polska w orbicie wielkich idei*, 156). Within Catholic circles, for example, his ideas about moral upbringing were considered incompatible with religious belief (Stepkowski, 'Herbart i jego myśl w Polsce', 107–11).
141. Dutkowa, *Polityka szkolna w Galicji*, 152.
142. Mallinson, *Power*, 33 and 60.
143. *Ibid.*, 46.
144. Schmidt, 'Sprachnationale Konflikte', 195.
145. On school buildings, see Mallinson, *Power*, 33 and 60. On teacher training see Bischoff, *Die deutsche Sprache in Belgien*, 18–19; Fittbogen, *Schulrecht*, 25.
146. Tyssens, *Om de schone ziel*, 61–75; Gubin and Lefèvre, 'Obligation scolaire'.
147. Tyssens, *Om de schone ziel*, 55 and 83.
148. Mallinson, *Power*, 102.
149. de Schaepdrijver, *De groote oorlog*, 20.
150. Statistics are inaccurate and range from 20 to 40 per cent (Charriaut, *La Belgique moderne*, 125; Schmidt, 'Sprachnationale Konflikte', 199).
151. Depaepe, *Order in Progress*, 244.
152. Depaepe, 'De pedagogiek', 331; Willmann, *Pädagogische Vorträge*; Majorek, 'Herbartyzm', 20. For example, the direct method for teaching foreign languages that had been developed in the German Empire was introduced. Teachers were supposed to offer pupils explanations of unknown words in the foreign language but in reality often continued to translate (Gobert, *Dans un pays bilingue*, 6 and 32).
153. Sobczak, *Nowe wychowanie*, 26.
154. Decroly, *Institut d'enseignement spécial*; Descoeudres et al., *Erziehungsspiele*.
155. Schumann, 'Introduction', 2.
156. Ingold, *Lines*, 152–53.
157. Marin, 'Reforming the Better', 158.
158. See Lejeune, *Die Deutsch-Belgischen Kulturbeziehungen*; Bahlcke, Gawrecki and Kaczmarek, *Historia Górnego Śląska*.
159. Brüll, 'Historiographie', 160. For an exception, see Aerts, *Repressie*.
160. Ther, *Dark Side*; Douglas, *Orderly and Humane*; Lejeune, *Die Säuberung*.
161. On Upper Silesia, see Gawrecki, *Politické a národnostní poměry*; Bjork et al., *Creating Nationality*; Karch, *Nation*; Michalczyk, *Heimat*; Rosenbaum, *Górny Śląsk i Górnoszlązacy*. On the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, see Kartheuser, *Les années 30 à Eupen-Malmedy*; Lejeune, *Grenzerfahrungen*, vol. 4; O'Connell, *Annexation*; Wenselaers, *De laatste Belgen*. For an exception, see Tiedau, 'Die Rechtslage'.
162. For Upper Silesia, see Kaczmarek, Kucharski and Cybula, *Alzacja/Lotaryngia*; Michalczyk, *Heimat*; Wilson, *Frontiers*. For a comparison of Eupen and the Czech city of Známko in the interwar years, see Kontny, 'Herrschaftssicherung'.

163. Eser, 'Volk, Staat, Gott!'; Fałęcki, *Niemieckie szkolnictwo mniejszościowe*; Glimos-Nadgórska, *Polskie szkolnictwo*; Novikov, *Shades*.
164. An example is Meyers, *Impulse*; exceptions are the overview article of Lejeune, 'Abtretung' and Lejeune, 'Von Tafel'.
165. Fuchs, *Toujours prêts*, 4.
166. This observation had already been made by Belgian historical pedagogical scientists in the 1990s (Depaepe, de Vroede and Simon, '1936 Curriculum Reform', 371).
167. Gemischte Kommission für Oberschlesien, *Amtliche Sammlung*, vol. 1, 2, and 3.
168. This observation holds for the district of Lubliniec. See Archiwum Państwowe w Katowicach (APK), 1363 Starostwo Lubliniecki 1922–39, Dopytyw. 172 a korespondencja, informacje, zgłoszenia o rozpoczęciu działalności organizacji i stowarzyszenia na terenie powiatu lublinieckiego.
169. For literature, see Schenk, *Les mouvements*, vol. 1; Pfadfinder Obere Weser, *Allzeit bereit*. For archival sources, see Schillings, *Entre Allemagne et Belgique*; RULAND – Private Archive of Herbert Ruland, Eynatten, Bredhol, B., 'Tagebuch', Eupen 1938.
170. Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes Berlin (PAAAB), R 31044, Ferienaufenthalte Deutschland-Polen 1929–34. For the region of Eupen, see Schenk, 'Les mouvements', vol. 1.
171. Oswell, *Agency of Children*, 3.
172. Maynes, 'Age', 114–24; Qvortrup, Corsaro and Honig, *Childhood Studies*.
173. Michlic, *Jewish Children*, 16.
174. Venken and Röger, 'Growing up', 204.
175. Examples of books analysing ego sources are Blessing, *Antifascist Classroom*; Iwanicka and Dubas, *Wojna w oczach dziecka*.
176. Oswell, *Agency of Children*, 3.
177. Wille and Hesse, 'Spaces', 35. A similar observation can be found in Venken, *Borderland Studies*.
178. Venken, 'Borderland Child Heterotopias'.
179. For an example, see Wierling, *Geboren im Jahr Eins*.
180. Forman-Brunell and Paris, 'Introduction', 6.
181. See Doepgen, *Abtretung*, 5. For Upper Silesia, see Bjork et al., 'Introduction', 1–7.
182. Beyen and van Ginderachter, 'General Introduction', 11.
183. Kocka and Haupt, 'Introduction', 2.
184. Elliott, *National and Comparative History*, 23.
185. Kocka and Haupt, 'Introduction', 7.
186. Schriewer, 'Problemdimensionen', 30.
187. Kaschuba, 'Gesellschaftsvergleich', 345; Kocka and Haupt, 'Introduction', 4.
188. Kocka and Haupt, 'Introduction', 10; Mjøset, 'Versuch über die Grundlagen', 220.
189. Kocka and Haupt, 'Introduction', 21.
190. All these aspects will be discussed within this monograph, with the exception of cross-border family visits. For the latter, see Bundesarchiv Koblenz (BAK), NL, 174, 23 P, 5b, 1–2 (Brief an den Führer [von] Deutschland, Eupen, 18 October 1938), and *Loben-Guttentager Kreisblatt*, 'Jugendjahre in Oberschlesien', vol. 21, 1978, 8, 2; vol. 21, 1978, 9, 2; vol. 21, 1978, 10, 2; vol. 21, 1978, 11, 2; vol. 21, 1978, 13, 1; vol. 21, 1978, 14, 1. Here vol. 21, 1978, 10, 2.
191. Maria Theresa introduced mandatory primary education in the Habsburg Empire as early as 1774. In Denmark, compulsory basic schooling was provided in 1814 (Jespersen, *History of Denmark*, 101), whereas in France, the Third Republic initiated such schooling following the defeat of 1871 (Hörner, 'Frankreich', 83). Children in Prussia

- and the Habsburg Empire were already subject to compulsory schooling in the nineteenth century, whereas authorities in Tsarist Russia did not regulate schooling at all. Russia and Belgium are most commonly known as the last countries on the European continent to implement compulsory education, but Lithuania needed until 1928 to regulate mass education by law (Harrison, *Lithuania*, 94).
192. On the absence of Jews in Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, see Brüll, 'Eupen-Malmedy' (2017), 268.
 193. Kulczycki, *Belonging*, 15ff.
 194. Mały Rocznik Statystyczny, 1937, 15; Mały Rocznik Statystyczny, 1938, 15; Timmermann, *Zur nationalen Integration*, 300; Schärer, *Deutsche Annexionspolitik*, vol. 38, 86.
 195. Wanatowicz, 'Aktywność', 131–75.
 196. Lee, 'Economic Development', 347–48. See also Fickers, Lejeune and Ruland, 'Industrialisierung', 2016.
 197. van Banning, *Gebiedsovergang*, 87.
 198. Düspohl, 'Arbeitsmigration', 190–203.
 199. Wanatowicz, 'Województwo śląskie'; Masnyk, 'Prowincja górnośląska'.
 200. Quadflieg, 'Elitenkontinuität', 115ff.
 201. van Banning, *Gebiedsovergang*, 89; Czapliński, 'Dzieje Śląska', 395; Lejeune, Rauw and Jousten, 'Die große Suche'.
 202. In Germany, between the years 1921 and 1925, 2.2 children were born per 100 inhabitants. In the period 1932–1938, their number declined to 1.8 (Jezierski and Leszczyńska, 'Okres', 182). In Poland, 3.2 births per 100 inhabitants were reported in 1920, a number which increased throughout the 1920s and, despite the economic crisis, remained above 3 until 1931. Later, it gradually declined to 2.4 births per 100 inhabitants in 1938. The birth rates in Poland's western provinces followed the Polish trend (Jezierski and Leszczyńska, 'Okres', 180). In the Lubliniec district of Polish Upper Silesia, the population growth from 44,306 at the end of 1930 to 50,518 at the end of 1938 was more the result of increasing birth rates than of migration ('Stan ludności powiatu lublinieckiego w grudniu 1930 r.', *Tygodnik Powiatowy na powiat lubliniecki*, 1931, 3, 22–23; 'Stan ludności powiatu lublinieckiego w IV. kwartale 1938', *Tygodnik powiatowy na powiat lubliniecki*, 1938, 28, unpaginated). The birth rate in Belgium decreased from 2.04 births per 100 inhabitants between 1901 and 1905 to 1.32 births between 1931 and 1935 (Meslé, 'Mortalité infantile', 252).
 203. In 1922, for example, the public primary school in Lubliniec had 965 pupils. In the 1934–1935 school year, the number of children in the school had increased to 1473 (Bulik and Centerowska, *Szkieł monograficzny*, 8–9).
 204. In the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, birth rates showed a similar trend to the overall Belgian pattern, but declined more slowly. The birth rate in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy amounted to 2.76 births per 100 inhabitants in 1921. It declined to 1.66 births between 1931 and 1935 (Statistique par commune).
 205. Mezzadra and Neilson, *Border as Method*, 195.
 206. See Brambilla, 'Critical Potential', 27.
 207. Kulczycki, *Belonging*, 10.
 208. Kamusella, 'Isomorphism', 57–92.
 209. Gellner, *Nations*, 27.

SCHOOLS, LANGUAGE AND CHILDREN DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR



The shot fired by a young Serbian patriot that killed Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, on 28 June 1914, sparked the First World War. In the month that followed, the two coalitions of Great Powers on the European continent, the Triple Entente of France, Russia and Britain (later called the Allied Powers), and the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy (later called the Central Powers), mobilised their military forces. On 2 August, Germany demanded free access through Belgium so that its armies could invade France. When Belgian politicians refused to give up the country's neutrality, the German army invaded Belgium a day later and declared war on France, whereupon the Belgian government declared war on Germany.

Children experienced the German invasion of Belgium differently than adults. While German troops were marching through the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, fifteen-year-old Leonie Schmetz wrote in her diary that children were playing war games on the streets.¹ German soldiers were confused by what they found in the Belgian-German borderlands. Most were unaware that French was the language used by the inhabitants of Prussian Wallonia, and it also came as a shock to them to discover that people on the other side of the state border line spoke German but did not endorse Germany's invasion of the neutral Belgian state they inhabited.² In a letter sent home by a German soldier, he recalled his time in Malmedy as follows: 'The population assured us again and again: "Nous sommes de vous Allemands" (We are Germans), but already during a stop at the marketplace, a little boy shouted to me, "Just you wait, when the French arrive, then you'll fill your pants"'.³ The local boy dared to publicly express the loyalty towards France that local inhabitants had increasingly started to develop, and could get away with it unpunished.

Notes for this chapter begin on page 54.

The German invasion took the shape of a total war, bringing about vast devastation and the murdering of soldiers and civilians. A rumour at night that the enemy was close by, followed by a random shot in the dark, was sufficient to provoke a wild killing spree.⁴ After shooting at some houses in the Wallonian village of Soiron, German soldiers found a family with a one-year-old child hidden in the cellar, snatched one man and shot him in the neck. The young mother used her child in the hope of invoking compassion in the soldier: 'She held up the child she was carrying in her arms, while holding the soldier's hands so that he would show mercy on them all: "Take everything we have, take everything," she shouted, "but let us live".'⁵ The worst act of atrocity towards civilians was committed in Dinant, where 674 inhabitants were killed by German soldiers, regardless of their age or sex.⁶

The German invasion was stopped at the end of October when Belgian troops flooded the Yser River. A 750-kilometre front line was established from the North Sea over the flooded lowlands of the banks of the Yser to the French state border line, crossing through the Vosges, and reaching the French-Swiss border line further south. Whereas the greater part of the pre-war Belgian Kingdom stayed under German occupation for the next four years, a small part in the south-west (the Westhoek) remained unoccupied. During the German invasion, one and a half million Belgian soldiers and civilians fled the country, mainly to the Netherlands, France and Great Britain. Among the first refugees arriving in the Netherlands were up to 80,000 German citizens who had been living mostly in the cities of Brussels and Antwerp.⁷ Their fear turned out to be justified: under the German occupation, Belgium transformed from a liberal state where immigrants did not need to hold Belgian citizenship to be considered an equal member of the national community into one where descent and national identification were the main criteria for inclusion.⁸

In Upper Silesia, it remained remarkably calm during the opening days of the war. Apart from the conscription of men to the German army, everyday life continued unchanged. Poles in Central Eastern Europe joined one of the three imperial armies, such as the military unit set up initially within the Austro-Hungarian army, called the Polish Legions, one brigade of which was led by the man who would later become the de facto leader of the Second Polish Republic, Józef Piłsudski. Despite the legal minimum age for recruitment being seventeen, the only factor that counted in practice was a height of 140 cm, which resulted in children as young as eleven joining the forces.⁹ The high number of young recruits, estimated at tens of thousands, was already apparent at the time, and favoured the propagandistic image of the Legions' leader, Józef Piłsudski, as a grandfather taking care of his sons.¹⁰ Other Polish army formations were

less numerous. Following an agreement between Austro-Hungary and Germany in April 1917, a Polish military unit was formed within the German Empire, but it never counted more than 3,000 soldiers. Meanwhile, Piłsudski's counterpart in interwar Polish politics, Roman Dmowski, took the initiative to launch a Polish military contingent for volunteers in France in 1917, called the Blue Army (*Błękitna Armia*), which first fought at the Western Front and later in the Polish-Ukrainian and Polish-Soviet wars over the state border lines of the newly independent Polish Second Republic.¹¹

In order to support the Allied Powers fighting against the German army in Belgium and northern France, the tsarist army invaded Prussia from the east. In Upper Silesia, rumours about atrocities circulated, fueling the fear that Russian troops could cross the German state border line at any moment, but the Battle of Tannenberg at the end of August 1914 set minds at rest and consolidated the belief that Emperor Wilhelm II would be able to protect the security of Upper Silesia's population.¹² The German Emperor indeed envisioned the creation of an independent buffer zone from East Prussia to Upper Silesia linked to the Reich.¹³ On their way east, German troops entered Congress Poland and felt no compunction about causing the deaths of civilians, such as happened during the bombing of the Jewish quarter of Kalisz.¹⁴ The tsarist army was quickly pushed out of part of Congress Poland but was able to secure control over almost the whole of Galicia between December 1914 and the summer of 1915. In Przemyśl, where civilians gathered whose houses in the surrounding villages had been burned down by tsarist soldiers, the Austro-Hungarian army defended the fortified city for 133 days. One of those trapped during the siege, the Austrian writer Ilka-Künigl Ehrenburg, wrote: 'How often do officers, beaten in their coats, bring in lost children from the villages! There, in the middle of the rain, a three-year-old boy, all alone, laughing and playing in the field. Soldiers who found him could not get anything out of him, just the words "Babbo America".'¹⁵

Of all the inhabitants of the multiethnic and multireligious region of Galicia, Jews suffered the most. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Galicia became a place of refuge for Jews fleeing pogroms in the Russian Empire, accounting for a third of the local population at the time of the invasion.¹⁶ Russian violence against Jews included the killing of civilians, the stealing or burning of their belongings, and deportations to areas beyond the Dnieper River. While the Russian Empire's allies, Great Britain and France, knew about the tsarist army's atrocities in Galicia, they did not call for an end to them. Instead, they preferred to keep international attention focused on the atrocities taking place much closer to their homes, in Belgium.¹⁷ Up to 300,000 Galician Jews fled westwards

in search of safety, with approximately a third of them settling in Vienna. With shortages in the supply of milk and potatoes already visible in the autumn of 1914, Galician Jewish children queuing in front of shops, sent by their working mothers, became part of the everyday life of the city.¹⁸

In the summer of 1915, the German and Austro-Hungarian armies reconquered Galicia and evicted the tsarist army from Congress Poland, where they erected a German zone, including the city of Warsaw, and a smaller Austrian zone to the south.¹⁹ A pivotal battle leading to Russia's defeat took place in Gorlice-Tarnów, during which the tsarist army bombed civilian houses, killing hundreds of men, women and children in the process.²⁰ On their retreat, the tsarist army burned down villages and deported local inhabitants en masse to the Russian interior. On his way to Bielsk Podlaski, a British attaché witnessed a twenty-mile uninterrupted procession of horse carts filled with families and useful materials.²¹ In the turmoil of the Russian withdrawal from Galicia, the remaining local civilians started to attack each other. For Poles and Ukrainians, Jews became once again unwanted neighbours.²²

With the Central Powers' occupation of Congress Poland, a new chapter began. Enjoying more decision-making power, primarily in the domains of education and welfare, the region became a laboratory for experiments in what future Polish statehood might look like, and how it might be constituted. Several concepts of political thinking developed at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century were tested out within the everyday war reality of poverty and hunger. Policies towards children were prioritised, as children were to become the backbone of the new Polish state. Within that process, the Polish child gradually took shape.²³

Away from the front lines of the war, the everyday life of children continued. By situating the everyday life of children living in the two case study borderlands within the broader context of the everyday life of children in the political entities of relevance for this study (namely, the German Empire, Belgium, the Kingdom of Poland and Galicia), similarities and differences can be detected. The everyday life of children living on the fringes of the German Empire during the First World War was in many aspects similar to elsewhere in the empire. Their fathers were conscripted to the army, while boys aged sixteen to twenty were trained to follow in their footsteps by attending a military preparation course.²⁴ Initially, the war attracted the fascination of local inhabitants. Karl Kaisig, a librarian from Gliwice (Upper Silesia), remarked: 'My neighbour had never even previously looked at a map . . . Now she's asking me, for example, whether Brussels is bigger than Belgium or whether Bavaria is fighting with us or against us.'²⁵ As the war went on, however, agrarian production decreased

by up to a third and food supplies became irregular. Children saw how compulsory levies on milk and wheat influenced their nutrition.²⁶ Eventually, approximately 56,000 conscripts from Upper Silesia and 1,800 from the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy would not survive the war.²⁷ When Hermann Heutz's wounded father returned to his home in the region of Eupen in the spring of 1918, the boy remembered: 'I doubt that our father's return significantly boosted our very meagre bill of fare. Father couldn't make flour, bacon or butter either. Even in matters of education or punishment, we children didn't notice any changes.'²⁸

The war also made it into the classroom. Initially, it eased the introduction of reform methods in primary education, such as the collective reading of newspaper articles and the writing of personal narratives instead of the composition of essays within rigidly enforced rules prescribing content, style and thesis.²⁹ But it did not take long before teaching personnel ran short and oldest sons were relieved from compulsory education in order to take care of the family farm.³⁰ By now, the war was not only discussed in the 'war hour' added to the school curriculum, where the heroic deeds of individual German soldiers were described, but found its way to other subjects as well.³¹ A mathematics textbook printed in 1917 asked: 'A machine gun fires eight shots a second. How long does it take for 300 cartridges to be fired?'³² Pupils were also given an active role in alleviating the shortages of a war economy. Whether by saving coins, collecting berries for the production of juice for injured soldiers, or gathering the pits of stone fruits for the extraction of oil, children could do their bit for the German nation.³³

When nutrition was scarce during the winter of 1916–1917, the various private welfare organisations that had provided treatment camps for children growing up in cities throughout the German Empire were replaced by the Reich Central Office Country Residence for City Children (Reichszentrale Landaufenthalt für Stadtkinder), which in 1918 sent 575,000 German children to the countryside, either to treatment camps or to a stay with a farmer's family.³⁴ A leaflet addressing German farming women appealed to them to open their homes and hearts to urban children: 'The German people thank you rural women in the north, south, east and west of our fatherland for your charitable deeds for the sake of Germany's youth . . . Welcome them, you German rural women, as our fatherland needs powerful youth.'³⁵ The fact that the provinces of Silesia and the Rhineland were still receiving urban children as late as the summer of 1918 in similar numbers to the other provinces of Prussia indicates that they were not yet considered unsafe places.³⁶ Children were officially recruited on the basis of their malnutrition and weakened health, but even the yearly report of the Reich Central Office admitted that the children's

contribution had made the potato harvest 'significantly better' than the previous year.³⁷

For children in the regions of Eupen, there were constant reminders that a war was taking place: the two military airports, with planes regularly taking off in the direction of Belgium, and the railway station of Herbestahl, transporting German soldiers to the Belgian front line, bringing injured German soldiers home, and taking Belgian prisoners of war deeper into the German Empire.³⁸ In the north, where the region of Eupen bordered the Netherlands, Belgium and the condominium of Neutral Moresnet, the German military installed a lethal electric fence of over two hundred kilometres, colloquially referred to as the Wire of Death (*doden-draad*), in order to block migration from occupied Belgium to the neutral Netherlands.³⁹ The wire not only wounded any child who touched it out of curiosity, but also opened a window of opportunity for children, who played a special role within the smuggling activities coordinated from the city of Eupen, known at the time as the smuggling Eldorado.⁴⁰ Border guards were not particularly eager to shoot at children smuggling butter or cigarettes, and if they did, they mostly shot in the air. Nevertheless, the Dutch administration in the province of Limburg estimated that by 1917 there had already been five hundred casualties of the wire, a death toll that included children from the region of Eupen.⁴¹ Other local children were not directly involved in the smuggling, but were the beneficiaries of its results, and found milk, eggs and white bread on their breakfast tables.⁴² In the region of Malmedy, on the other hand, children born after 1915 needed to be given a German instead of a French name, and the conscription of young local Belgian citizens to the German army that began in the autumn of 1916 provoked at least some to reflect on their loyalties. Awaiting his conscription, one young man from Malmedy pleaded with the Belgian king to be allowed to join the Belgian forces instead: '[in order] to allow me the opportunity to prove the extent of my desire and my right to be counted among the numbers of other Belgians, even if it means sacrificing my life'.⁴³

Children in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy found themselves in a more privileged situation than children in Belgium. Whereas most children remained in Belgium during the German occupation, there were also children among the 600,000 pre-war inhabitants of Belgium who stayed in exile during the war. In occupied Belgium, the quality of education very much depended on local circumstances: the knowledge of the uncertified teachers taking over educational responsibilities from the pre-war teaching personnel drafted into the Belgian army, the degree to which school buildings were destroyed or used by the military, and the physical condition of children in a time when cattle and grain were

seized by the occupiers.⁴⁴ Outside their schools, children were reported using sticks as swords in their war games and testing out ammunition, a practice which, for example, caused the death of fifteen children in Waregem in March 1918 (West Flanders).⁴⁵ The occupying regime also brought about language tensions in primary education. The right of a guardian to choose freely whether to send his child to a public or a subsidised private (i.e. Catholic) school, and whether to have his child taught in French or Dutch, as prescribed in the Belgian compulsory education law of 1914, was subjected to a crucial test in the city of Brussels.⁴⁶ The German occupying forces dictated that guardians must choose Dutch as the language of instruction for their children. When Emile Jacquemin, the alderman of education, tried to justify his refusal to grant that decision-making power political authority on the basis of the new Belgian law, he was deported to Germany.⁴⁷ In the Flanders countryside, however, people did not experience similar hardships, and for that reason appeared more likely to be in favour of the *Flamenpolitik* that sought to win the sympathy of people in Flanders, by means of supporting a proliferation of the Dutch language, among other policies, in order to dissolve the country.⁴⁸

Out of a concern to keep the children away from fighting and violence, the biggest campaign in the history of the Belgian Kingdom was launched to evacuate children and provide them with a safe shelter and the opportunity to continue their education.⁴⁹ In Great Britain, about 50,000 children of Belgian immigrant families received primary education, most in English schools under the supervision of a Belgian teacher. 10,000 of these were educated in a Belgian school system set up by the Belgian Catholic Church, where children were taught in their own language, whether that be French or Dutch.⁵⁰ In France, thanks to the support of Belgian authorities and various relief associations, an estimated 14,000 children from Belgium were enrolled at boarding schools. These associations included the Children of Flanders Rescue Committee set up by the American writer Edith Wharton, the Belgian Civil Aid (*Aide Civile Belge*), the Franco-American Committee for the Protection of Children of the Border (*Comité Franco-Américain pour la Protection des Enfants de la Frontière*), and the Scottish Home / the Children of the Fire Zone Organisation (*Le Foyer Ecossais / Œuvre des Enfants de la zone du Feu*) set up by the Scottish nurse Georgie Fyfe, who worked together with the French Red Cross. In addition, two Roman Catholic nuns from Roesbrugge, a Belgian town near the front line, who had fled their monastery, set up a boarding school for the children of their neighbourhood in Normandy.⁵¹ In the Netherlands, about 15,000 immigrant children went to schools offering education in Dutch, subsidised by the Dutch government, including the children living in family camps erected for interned Belgian soldiers who had crossed

the Belgian-Dutch state border line.⁵² The last international destination for child refugees from Belgium was Switzerland, where about 1,400 children were placed under the supervision of the Hospitalisation of Belgian Refugees Organisation (L'Œuvre d'hospitalisation des réfugiés belges), partly funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, as well as the Swedish Committee for the Relief of Belgian Children in Switzerland (Comité suédois de secours aux enfants belges en Suisse).⁵³ Children were also evacuated from the non-occupied area of Belgium. Two schools of Queen Elisabeth (*koninginnescholen*) were erected twelve kilometres from the front line in order to provide education to 600 children away from the trenches.⁵⁴

One common element of Belgian schooling during the war years, regardless of whether education was provided in the country or abroad, was the development of patriotic teaching content for the masses. In a country where compulsory education had only been decreed in 1914, and where inhabitants were for the first time taking up arms to fight for its existence, teachers experimented with the provision of patriotic images of Belgium outside history lessons: through gymnastics, singing and even the making of traditional Belgian bobbin lace.⁵⁵ Their efforts contributed to the inclusion of a new course in civic education in the post-war teaching plan of 1922.⁵⁶ Although the 1914 law prescribed that children needed to be taught in their mother tongue, the realities of wartime life meant many of the children in exile received their education in a language they did not speak at home, which led to difficulties in continuing their education once the war had come to an end.⁵⁷ Another aspect of the wartime experience that resulted in a new policy after the end of the war was the alleviation of the living conditions of abandoned and physically weakened children.⁵⁸ With the war risking an increase in child mortality and child tuberculosis patients, the National Committee for Aid and Food (Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation / Nationaal Hulp- en Voedingscomite) (since 1914), and especially its Aid and Protection of Children section (Aide et protection des œuvres de l'enfance) (since 1915), organised the distribution of imported and mostly American-sponsored food as well as mother's breast milk.⁵⁹ It also arranged at a national level for sick and endangered children to attend treatment camps at the Belgian seaside.⁶⁰ The fact that infant mortality in Belgium decreased during the war convinced politicians that preventive child welfare was worth public investment after the war had ended.⁶¹

Meanwhile, although children in Upper Silesia found themselves in a safer and more economically prosperous situation than children in Congress Poland, they missed out on the experimental policies of childhood launched in order to establish which children were to be considered Polish and what role these children would have in a future independent Polish

state. From the very beginning, there were differences between the educational policies pursued in Upper Silesia, Congress Poland and Galicia. Whereas in Upper Silesia, primary education in the German language was mandatory at the time, when compulsory education for children was introduced by the Citizen's Committee (Komitet Obywatelski) in Warsaw, for the first time in the history of the city and only eighteen days after the German army had taken control, it was not specified in which language that education was to be provided.⁶² This gave a boost not only to education in Polish but also education in Yiddish and Hebrew, significantly revitalising and diversifying the Jewish school landscape beyond Jewish orthodox schooling, and laying the foundations for an important interwar Zionist school network called the Tarbut.⁶³ A year later, a German edict issued in September 1915 separated German-speaking schools from Polish-speaking ones and assigned Jewish children to the German-speaking schools as they were considered a religious, not a linguistic minority. According to the historian Carole Fink:

In an age in which language had become the key to national identity, the most explosive issue between Poles and Jews involved schools . . . There was an immediate outcry from the local population. The Poles were furious over competition with the master tongue. Polish Jews, many of whom preferred that their children be instructed in Yiddish, Hebrew, or even Polish, resented their exploitation as tools of *Deutschtum* by the occupiers as well as by German Jews.⁶⁴

In the Austrian zone of Congress Poland, on the other hand, the soldiers of the Polish Legions highlighted the social differences that could prove difficult to bridge in a future Polish state. They were disappointed that connecting with the local rural population turned out to be so difficult: 'The conservatism of the village fostered faith in the good tsar, just as it once did in Galicia – in the just emperor.'⁶⁵ And when in November 1916 the German and Austrian zones were absorbed into the newly established Kingdom of Poland, thereby giving rise to a quasi-independent satellite state without clearly defined state border lines, and without the support of the Allied Powers, the inhabitants of Upper Silesia were far from enthusiastic. They knew the Kingdom of Poland did not include Upper Silesia, and nor was it foreseen to do so. Thus, after the soldiers from Upper Silesia conscripted to the German army had seen the precarious living conditions of its population, the question was whether such an inclusion was worth striving for.⁶⁶

Another initiative contributing to the quest to establish the meaning of a Polish child in the occupied Kingdom of Poland was child welfare. The locally established Central Welfare Council (Rada Główna Opiekuńcza), upon whose experiences the public child welfare system in interwar Po-

land would be founded, used the image of a Polish child as an emblem promising national unity between people with different geographical or social backgrounds. Addressing farming women with slogans such as ‘All of Poland calls out: “Save the children!”’, it presented the task of caring for hungry city children as an obligation decisive for the prosperity of the nation.⁶⁷ Financed by philanthropists, self-help organisations and the occupying forces, the Central Welfare Council had 125,000 children and youngsters under its care in 1918 and placed 11,000 urban children with rural families between 1915 and 1920.⁶⁸ The suspicion of city dwellers at the idea of having their children raised by what they considered to be uncultivated peasants, and the fact that city children continued to be referred to as ‘foreign’ in rural communities, ought to give us a clear indication of the extent to which a national Polish child was not yet considered a self-evident social category.⁶⁹

In international circles, this understanding was also lacking. The ethnographer Bronislas Paderewski, wanting to differentiate Polish children from other children belonging to the Habsburg Empire, looked for examples matching this definition among the hundreds of children transported from Galicia to a Swiss treatment camp in the summer of 1917. After failing to find any, he started an international fundraising campaign to pay for Polish children to be sent there, but it failed to gather the necessary funds.⁷⁰ With the Great Powers funding the evacuation of Belgian children, children from Galicia, the Habsburg Empire’s poorest province, were far more likely to be sent abroad. Approximately 20,000 Polish speakers from the vicinities of Przemyśl and the Bukovina, for example, found refuge in the Czech-speaking village of Choczeń, where a local priest encouraged pupils to express their war experiences in their drawings. While most of the drawings depict tanks, ammunition, planes and bombs, mostly targeting civilian houses, others focus on the evacuation process, depicting trains or columns of horse-drawn carriages.⁷¹ Meanwhile, for those children who stayed behind in Galicia, the situation rapidly deteriorated. The National School Council chronicle produced during the war years reads: ‘Children were anaemic, cadaverous and exhausted, with more and more visible symptoms of tuberculosis, which especially in the cities had spread in an alarming way: the mortality rate increased to unprecedented proportions.’⁷² The most important function of the remaining Galician schools became to care for pupils’ hygiene, with a basic school hygiene programme being introduced that would later be copied in interwar Polish schools.⁷³

When Piotr Bojarski, a Polish-speaking seven-year-old from a village near Radom, heard from his neighbours that the Russian Revolution could bring back home his father, who was serving in the Tsarist army, he wrote in his diary that he ‘immediately ran off to mum and repeated the words

of Rybicki. Busy with her work, [his] mother replied, "My child, if we pray, that is what will happen."⁷⁴ The ambitions of inhabitants within the Kingdom of Poland were fuelled by the Provisional Government in Russia, which as early as a month after the Russian Revolution spoke in favour of an independent Polish state. A little later, the United States became militarily engaged in the war effort.⁷⁵ As a belated response, in the late summer of 1917, the occupiers of the Kingdom of Poland widened the decision-making power of local inhabitants by installing a three-member Regency Council prior to the future appointment of a monarch, a council which together with the prime minister shared responsibility over educational policymaking.⁷⁶ As a result, in the last months of the war, Polish officially became the universal language of instruction in the primary schools of the Kingdom of Poland.⁷⁷ A more pressing matter at the time, however, were the border lines of the kingdom. The first peace treaty bringing the war to a halt was concluded in February 1918 between the Central Powers and the semi-independent newly created Ukrainian state, which included parts of Galicia. It was accompanied with a secret agreement between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Ukrainian People's Republic ensuring, *inter alia*, the right of Polish, Jewish and German minorities to school education in their own language.⁷⁸ During the peace negotiations in Brest-Litovsk, it was agreed in March 1918 that the region of Chełm would become part of the Ukrainian People's Republic. This decision was made without the consent of the Kingdom of Poland, which had not been invited.⁷⁹

While some German troops stayed in Central and Eastern Europe, others were now transferred to the west, and on 21 March 1918 a new German offensive started at the Yser River.⁸⁰ For the children in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, the war became visible again in November 1918. Between the German Revolution replacing the monarchy with a parliamentary republic and the armistice of 11 November calling for the cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of the German army to behind the Rhine River, Allied forces bombed German railway tracks in the region of Eupen. The bombs missed their target and killed a little girl, Elise Verbert.⁸¹ During the retreat, children supported the German soldiers on their way back from the pre-war Belgian-German border in Garnstock: 'where we children . . . helped lift them onto a truck taking them to the railway station in Eupen'.⁸² After the German soldiers had left, it took four days until Allied forces arrived, a time when children played with the guns that were lying around.⁸³

While accompanying the British troops arriving in Eupen, war journalist Philip Gibbs reported that, although adults kept their distance, children ran out to greet him.⁸⁴ The English, French, American and Belgian troops installed an occupation zone in Germany encompassing the left bank of

the Rhine River and some 30 kilometres on its other side. The Belgian sector covered 10 per cent of the occupation zone and included the city of Aachen.⁸⁵ Very early during the Peace Negotiations in Paris, on 17 January 1919, the Belgian delegation publicly expressed its wish to include the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy in the Belgian Kingdom, but it would take until the middle of February before the news was printed in the local press.⁸⁶ The war was over, and a new chapter in the history of the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy was beginning.

In Central Eastern Europe, however, the same story continued. Peace did not come to the borderlands that found themselves free from imperial rule. Now various nationalist groups fought over their claims to the territory. There was to be no cessation of violence; instead, if anything, the violence escalated because what was at stake had changed. Whereas in the First World War, parties had engaged in conflict in order to force the other to concede to specific demands, what followed afterwards were 'existential conflicts' with the ultimate goal being to exterminate the unwanted other.⁸⁷ As a consequence, this violence was increasingly targeted at paramilitary groups and civilians instead of traditional army forces.⁸⁸

The establishment of the Polish independent state in late 1918 was from the very beginning entangled in conflicts over the contours of its state border lines. Józef Piłsudski's power base in November 1918 barely exceeded the border lines of the old Congress Poland from 1815, augmented by the western part of Galicia. Whereas its western state border lines were scheduled to be negotiated in Paris, its other state border lines were not.⁸⁹ In the east of the country, the Great War literally transformed into a civil war overnight. The young Poles who defended the city of Lwów in Galicia between 1 November 1918 and May 1919 can serve as an example here. When in the last days of the First World War, Ukrainian soldiers from the Austro-Hungarian army proclaimed an independent Ukrainian state, 6,022 volunteers took up arms in order to fight for the Polish cause. Among these Lwów Eaglets (*Orlęta lwowskie*) were 1,374 pupils, students and scouts.⁹⁰ Among them was Zofia Nowosielska, born in 1900, who joined the Polish Women's Voluntary Legion (*Ochotnicza Legia Kobiet*). She wrote in her diary that the Polish heroines her grandfather had told her about when she was a girl, such as Anna Henryka Pustowojt (1838–1881) and Emilia Plater (1806–1831), now motivated her 'to follow in the footsteps of these great women and show the boys that it is not their exclusive privilege to fight for the freedom of their country'.⁹¹ Lwów was eventually assigned to the Second Polish Republic, but the experience of Ukrainian independence galvanised Ukrainian nationalists in the interwar years, as well as their campaign to have the Ukrainian language taught in primary schools within the Polish Second Republic.

In the conflicts involving Central and Eastern Europe in the period between 1917 and 1923, violence could be used in order to ensure national self-determination, such as in Lwów in 1918–1919, or to generate a circulation of power. Characteristic of such periods, according to Robert Gerwarth, is the ‘simultaneous occurrence and frequent overlap of these two currents’.⁹² It was territory and industry that were at stake during the conflict in Upper Silesia, not the suppression of Polish freedom fighters by local German holders of power. In Upper Silesia, both German and Polish nationalists had illegal military forces at their disposal at the beginning of 1919. Initially, the Upper Silesian branch of Piłsudski’s Polish Army Organisation (*Polska Organizacja Wojskowa Piłsudskiego*), including youngsters who had fought in Lwów, was more numerous, but the German army defending the state border line between Germany and the new Polish independent republic soon mobilised more locally recruited voluntary border guards.⁹³ During three uprisings between 1919 and 1921, Polish and German statesmen outsourced the implementation of violence to paramilitary groups in order not to burn their fingers at the negotiation tables in Paris.⁹⁴ Upper Silesia plunged into a civil war where, unlike during the Great War, children also would die.⁹⁵

As was the case elsewhere in Europe, the First World War had a decisive influence on the way in which children were approached by adults in the political entities relevant for this study, but that turning point took different forms for different children.⁹⁶ Whereas in the German Empire, it resulted in a wider acceptance of the child-centred approach in reform pedagogy, in Belgium, it primarily concerned experimenting with a civic education for the masses, and in the Kingdom of Poland, it revolved around the questions of who and what a Polish child was, and, to a lesser extent, in which language the child was to be taught.⁹⁷ Over the course of the war, various private welfare initiatives joined forces and provided a blueprint for the national child welfare bodies established in its aftermath.

On the whole, everyday life during the war was easier for children growing up in Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy than for most of the children living in the other parts of their respective countries. This was because children could stay where they were, they were relatively safe, and their schools continued to operate. Even so, in the summer of 1918, their location close to the state border line did not prevent Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy from being included in the activities of the Reich Central Office Country Residence for City Children. Whereas in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, children witnessed healthy soldiers marching west and helped injured or captured soldiers being transported east, in Upper Sile-

sia, the war remained an event taking place somewhere else, until a civil war broke out with the three armed uprisings of 1919, 1920 and 1921.

Notes

1. Wichert-Schmetz, 'August 1914', 74.
2. Ruland, *Der erste Weltkrieg*, 181.
3. Leitzen, *Der große Krieg*, 56.
4. Böhler, *Auftakt*, 161.
5. Vinche, 1914–1918, 28–29.
6. Ruland, *Der erste Weltkrieg*, 246; Derez and Tixhon, *Villes martyres*.
7. Ruland, *Der erste Weltkrieg*, 319.
8. Caestecker and Vrints, 'National Mobilization', 145.
9. Chwałba, *Legiony*, 196–97.
10. Ibid., 252–53; Wołosik, *Bagnet*, 30.
11. Chwałba, *Legiony*, 167; Valasek, *Haller's Polish Army*.
12. Kortko and Ostałowska, *Pierony*, 57.
13. Leslie, *History of Poland*, 112–13.
14. Fink, *Defending*, 71.
15. Königl-Ehrenburg, *Przemysł*, 64–65.
16. Bihl, *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, 83–88.
17. Fink, *Defending*, 72.
18. Borodziej and Górny, *Nasza wojna*, vol. 1, 208 and 340; See also Herwig, *First World War*, 270.
19. Wandycz, *Partitioned Poland*, 351–52; Herwig, *First World War*, 146.
20. Borodziej and Górny, *Nasza wojna*, vol. 1, 151.
21. Ibid., 157.
22. Fink, *Defending*, 76.
23. Niziołek, 'Higiena i zdrowie'; Sosnowska, *Opieka*, 182.
24. Keutgens, 'Eupen', 20.
25. Karl Kaisg quoted in Kortko and Ostałowska, *Pierony*, 58.
26. Dornhof, 'Jugendjahre', 2.
27. Borodziej and Górny, *Nasza wojna*, vol. 1, 208; Kortko and Ostałowska, *Pierony*, 58; O'Connell, *Annexation*, 38.
28. Heutz, 'Jugenderinnerungen', 32.
29. Donson, 'Reform Pedagogy', 74–75.
30. Ruland, *Der erste Weltkrieg*, 450.
31. Kronenberg, *Kampf der Schule*, 376.
32. Rechnungsaufgaben aus der Kriegszeit. Zur Ergänzung der eingeführten Rechenbücher (Paul B. Fischer, Leipzig-Berlin 1917), quoted in Flemming, Saul and Witter, *Lebenswelten*, 231.
33. Kronenberg, *Kampf der Schule*.
34. Rauch, *Ferienkoloniebewegung*, 285–86.
35. Reichszentrale für die Vermittlung von Landaufenthalt für Stadtkinder, *Jahresbericht*, 'Landfrauen helfft!', 5.

36. Kortko and Ostałowska, *Pierony*, 58; Brüll and Kontny, *Eupen-Malmedy im europäischen Vergleich*, 42–43. Whereas Silesia sent out 21,230 and welcomed 18,035 children (in the rural Lublinitz district, no children were sent out, but 234 children arrived), in the Rheinland, 51,415 children were sent out and 25,461 arrived (including 19 children from Essen finding temporary lodging in Eupen, and 652 children from other places in the Rheinland coming to Malmedy), Reichszentrale für die Vermittlung von Landaufenthalt für Stadtkinder, *Jahresbericht*, 30, 38 and 48. See also Ruland, *Der erste Weltkrieg*, 451; Braumann, *Kinderlandverschickung*, 17 ff. and 399.
37. Reichszentrale für die Vermittlung von Landaufenthalt für Stadtkinder, *Jahresbericht*, 81 and 87.
38. Ruland, *Der erste Weltkrieg*, 435.
39. Abbenhuis, 'Where War Met Peace'.
40. Ruland, *Der erste Weltkrieg*, 413, 426 and 472.
41. *Ibid.*, 467–70.
42. Heutz, 'Jugenderinnerungen', 31–35.
43. Belgian State Archive in Brussels, Classement BD/331/287, René et Berthe Beckman Steinbach to His Majesty King Albert I, 4 April 1917 (quoted in O'Connell, *Annexation*, 38).
44. Vanhoebroek, 'Koninginnescholen', 99.
45. Barbry, 'Lager Onderwijs', 117 and 127.
46. Wils, *Vlaanderen*, 463.
47. Dominguez, 'Comment les imprécisions'.
48. Vrints, 'All the Butter', 230–49.
49. Amara, 'Belgische kinderen', 21.
50. Declercq, 'Belgische vluchtelingen'.
51. Quartier, 'Roesbrugge Dames', 55.
52. Barbry et al., *Naar school*, 179.
53. *Ibid.*, 171.
54. Vanhoebroek, 'Koninginnescholen', 99.
55. Kuyle, 'Kantonderwijs'.
56. Vanhoebroek, 'Koninginnescholen', 113.
57. Amara, 'Belgische kinderen', 21.
58. Vermandere, *We zijn goed aangekomen!*, 57; Jamin and Perrin, *Les politiques publiques*, 30.
59. The Commission for Relief in Belgium was an international organisation chaired by Herbert Hoover that shipped food to occupied Belgium and northern France during the First World War (den Hertog, 'Commission', 593–613).
60. Vermandere, *We zijn goed aangekomen!*, 31.
61. Infant mortality decreased from over 170 deceased children per 1,000 births to somewhere between 130 and 150 during the First World War (Meslé, 'Mortalité infantile', 252; Jamin and Perrin, *Les politiques publiques*, 31).
62. Borodziej and Górny, *Nasza wojna*, vol. 1, 411; Molenda, 'Children and Youth', 169, 181 and 184.
63. Frost, *Schooling*, 27–30.
64. Fink, *Defending*, 77.
65. Borodziej and Górny, *Nasza wojna*, vol. 1, 281.
66. Hauser, 'Zu Fragen', 108.
67. Rada Główna Opiekuńcza, *Ratujcie dzieci!*, Warsaw, 1916, quoted in Przeniosło, 'Wielka Kwestia', 95.
68. Szymczyk, 'Opieka', 59.

69. Hibbard, *Child Rescue*.
70. Plater-Zyberk, '*Fonds Paderewski*'.
71. Dalibor, *Když jsou slova zbytečná*.
72. Kronika Rady Szkolney Krajowej za lata 1916–17, 1917–18, 1918–19, Lwów, 1919, 40, quoted in Niziołek, '*Higiena i zdrowie*', 123.
73. Niziołek, '*Higiena i zdrowie*', 133.
74. Bojarski, *Życiorys Piotra Bojarskiego*, Miejska Dąbrowska, 1989, 112–13, quoted in Bojarski, '*Dzieciństwo w dobie Wielkiej Wojny*', 232.
75. Schaffer, '*USA*', 110–11.
76. Wandycz, *Partitioned Poland*, 357.
77. Fink, *Defending*, 82–83.
78. *Ibid.*, 93.
79. Wandycz, *Partitioned Poland*, 360–61.
80. Van Ypersele, '*Belgien*', 48.
81. Ruland, *Der erste Weltkrieg*, 458.
82. '*Eupen vor 75 Jahren. Siebenjähriger erlebt den Waffenstillstand*', *Grenz-Echo*, Schlembach, 10 November 1993.
83. Ruland, *Der erste Weltkrieg*, 533.
84. Philip Gibbs as quoted by Ruland, *Der erste Weltkrieg*, 521.
85. O'Connell, *Annexation*, 53; Ruland, *Der erste Weltkrieg*, 524.
86. *Eupener Nachrichten*, vol. 11, 24, 15 February 1919.
87. Gerwarth, *Vanquished*, 13.
88. Böhler, *Wojna domowa*.
89. Borodziej, *Geschichte Polens*, 95–100.
90. The 14-year-old Jerzy Bitschan became an icon in Poland during the interwar period. His grave can be found in the Cemetery of the Defenders of Lwów (Nicieja, *Lwowskie Orleża*).
91. Nowosielska, 1929, 19, quoted in Paul, Johnston and Short, *Children's Literature*, 262. Anna Henryka Pustowojt fought in the January Uprising of 1863 against tsarist rule and for Polish independence. Countess Emilia Plater was a captain in the Polish insurgent forces during the Uprising of 1830, who fought and died in what is now part of Lithuania.
92. Gerwarth, *Vanquished*, 10.
93. Böhler, *Wojna domowa*, 154. On the youngsters in Lwów travelling to Upper Silesia in order to fight for the Polish cause, see Wołosik, *Bagnet*, 129.
94. Böhler, *Wojna domowa*, 156.
95. *Ibid.*, 260.
96. Audoin-Rouzeau, '*Kinder*', 135–42; Stekl and Hämmerle, '*Kindheit/en*', 35–44; Wołosik, *Bagnet*.
97. Donson, '*Reform Pedagogy*', 80–81.

A FRAMEWORK OF COMPARISON



With the development of border studies as an interdisciplinary field in the post-Cold War era, a concomitant desire to provide a grand theory arose.¹ However, the conceptual and contextual burdens such a work entails have discouraged most scholars from doing so.² Anssi Paasi remarked: 'It remains a challenge for the imagination of the researcher to conceptualise and study empirically contextually manifested practices that may have their origins on diverging spatial scales and bring together events and processes from these.'³ Most of the conceptualisation and theorisation within border studies has taken place without the involvement of historians, despite the obvious need for a historicisation of the questions being addressed.⁴ Moreover, it is precisely because borders and borderlands are historically contingent processes, and historical comparative borderlands studies require a thorough reconstruction of the context, that the latter are rarely carried out.⁵

This book's analysis of the way in which borderland pupils were taught languages in interwar primary schools uses a newly developed framework of comparison. An inspiring template was found in Nenad Stefanov's detailed investigation of how a late Ottoman province turned into a divided space along the interwar Bulgarian-Yugoslav border by means of the three analytical axes of multiple loyalties, phantom borders, and micro/local history.⁶ This book significantly enriches this framework with insights from human geography, political science and border studies. The three analytical axes are called: borders and human territoriality, power and multiple loyalties, and microhistory within a multilayered context.

Borders and Human Territoriality

Since the nation-state has long been perceived as being 'a natural power container, clearly demarcated and situated in measured space', individual

Notes for this chapter begin on page 74.

nation-states were obvious units of historical research, and concepts of nationalisms the most common analytical tools at hand.⁷ Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, studies of borderlands on the European continent were often carried out in order to support nationalist claims. Within interwar Germany and the new Polish state, for example, such research was used to underpin political ideologies.⁸ In the period after the Second World War, such claims were made by the inhabitants from interwar Polish and Belgian borderlands who settled in (mostly Western) Germany.⁹ By the turn of the twenty-first century, however, space, which had been functioning in the background of most historical analyses, began to be foregrounded: 'Rather than assuming that space exists independently of humans and that historical processes unfold within it as a closed vessel and are even predetermined by it, present-day theorists conceive of it as a product of human agency and perception, as both the medium and pre-supposition for sociability and historicity.'¹⁰ An understanding of space as 'a social, political and cultural product' invites us to approach borderlands as flexible and historically changing phenomena.¹¹ What then becomes visible is that 'all space created through economic, social, cultural or political movements and interactions – and this applies even to the nation-state itself – is "transient space", in the sense that it is meaningful for historical actors only in relation to a specific set of perceptions, interests and strategies, and in a given temporal context'.¹²

In order to facilitate a deconstructive stance on space, a distinction is made throughout the book between the concepts of state border lines, borders, borderlands and border regions. Laura Di Fiore referred to a state border line as 'a line dividing two states conceived as the fixed layout, traced by state agents, through diplomatic agreements, between two territorial, political entities'.¹³ State border lines are not static. Thomas Nail, for example, compared state border lines to 'motors' that constantly need to be 'maintained, reproduced, refuelled, defended, started up, paid for, repaired and so on', and eventually 'leak'.¹⁴

A border is here conceived as the spatial effect generated through the drawing of a state border line. A border reveals how division is manifested within social space through multiple and recurring interactions between state agents and local inhabitants at different levels of decision-making, such as the regional, national, international, transnational and supranational levels. When Henk van Houtum called a border 'a verb', he intended to bring the question of how a border is made to the centre of attention, and to encourage research into the dynamics of border processes as brought about and experienced by borderland inhabitants.¹⁵ In this book, for example, it will be shown how the recruitment of pupils in borderland primary schools in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of

Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy became a crucial way of making the border at certain moments during the interwar period.

In this book, the concept of borderlands refers to pieces of land where sovereignty changed hands over the course of time, that Germany lost following the Treaty of Versailles and switched to either Polish or Belgian state sovereignty: Polish Upper Silesia and the border regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy. Polish Upper Silesia corresponds to the province of Silesia (*Województwo Śląskie*), as it was called in Poland at the time. The border regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy referred to in this book are identical to the administrative entity of Eupen-Malmedy in which they were gathered in 1920; after the dissolution of Eupen-Malmedy in the second half of the 1920s, this area was included in the Belgian province of Liège. The term borderlands does not refer to pieces of land finding themselves on opposite sides of one state border at the same time, which is the most common definition.¹⁶ Given the fact that Germany never abandoned its aspiration to regain the pieces of land it had ceded following the First World War, the pieces of land in this book match this definition: 'A borderland is both a place and a historiographic methodology, although historians often combine the two uses. A borderland, in its loosest definition, is a place where two entities (usually nations or societies) border each other. As a methodology, borderlands studies question what happens when distinct societies rub against each other or contest lands in between.'¹⁷

Moreover, bordering also has a temporal dimension. Borderlands have already been referred to as palimpsests: manuscripts 'on which two or more successive texts have been written, each one being erased to make room for the next'.¹⁸ Whereas the erasure can offer us a picture of the past as rupture, a group of mainly German historians has preferred to understand it as an activity of layering well captured by the concept of phantom borders. Phantom borders are 'earlier, most commonly political borders or territorial structures that, after they were dissolved, continued to structure the space'.¹⁹ The concept of phantom borders allows us to look at how, after a switch of state sovereignty, certain structures, discourses or practices from the past can reappear, be reassembled, or lost through human activities. The search for what remains in new and changing situational contexts concentrates on the way in which historical actors gave meaning to a new geographic-political order. Borders are thus approached as complex historically contingent processes, and borderlands as places where different ideas on belonging are negotiated and renegotiated whilst making use of, adapting or ignoring past structures, discourses and practices depending on the situational context.²⁰ In this book it will be shown, for example, how the primary school buildings constructed in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy during German times later functioned

as a phantom border during negotiations about language learning in the 1930s.

Negotiations in borderlands have dynamics. In what Philipp Ther has called *Zwischenräume*, i.e. linguistic, cultural, religious and/or ethnic transition areas, much contesting takes place, a fact which turns these regions, despite their peripheral location, into central sites of power struggle.²¹ Border scholars have invited us to look at borders and borderlands as spaces of 'excess', an excess that can take the form of either intensive border struggles or ostentatious control.²² An investigation of 'the fault lines, conflicts, differences, fear and containment that borders represent' exposes when and how understandings of the inside and the outside were pushed beyond their limits and resulted in new reconfigurations.²³ Struggles could thus turn borders and borderlands into resources, into spaces where new chances appeared.²⁴ Equally possible over time were situations where these resources were not made use of, and borders and borderlands were turned into contentious sites of control. Despite their obsession with developing an abundance of legal rules, however, state institutions found themselves unable to prevent legal normativity from fragmenting.²⁵ As a result, borders and borderlands became the places where the meaning of what was to be shaped as national space collapsed.²⁶

Offering a closer insight into the dynamics of struggles over space, human geographical thought has come up with an explanation of why such struggles have a tendency to become excessive. Human geographers have shown how the constant process of redirecting division over space has a dynamics of its own, a dynamics that can be similar in different contexts. The Swiss geographer Claude Raffestin, most prominently, referred to territory as 'the most material expression there is of the needs of humans'²⁷ and saw territory as the consequence of human territoriality, the latter being defined as the 'ensemble of relations that a society maintains with exteriority and alterity for the satisfaction of its needs, towards the end of attaining the greatest possible autonomy comparable with the resources of the system'.²⁸ In interpreting human territoriality relationally, Raffestin, writing in French, approaches human territoriality radically differently from Robert Sack, whose understanding has become more well-known internationally. Introducing Raffestin to the Anglo-Saxon world, Klauser explained: 'Raffestin's ambition goes far beyond Anglo-American readings of territoriality, which are concerned, predominantly, with the study of geopolitical strategies of control/defence of space and with the resulting political-territorial arrangements. The association of territoriality with politically bounded space in Anglo-American geography is such that, for some scholars, territoriality and relationality have come to be seen as opposites.'²⁹

Claude Raffestin's thinking is founded on the notion that networks of social relations and understandings produce territory. For Raffestin,

human territoriality can be found in the diverse and changing interactions between human beings and 'material and/or immaterial reality'.³⁰ Language learning, then, can be approached as a material reality codified in school buildings, teaching branches, textbooks, language exams, school curricula and suchlike, and as an immaterial reality of ideas on education and styles of teaching. Indeed, Raffestin's perspective invites us to unravel the everyday life practices that bring about territory, practices that are more complex than the strategies of control over space referred to by Sack. Sack's concept of human territoriality was grounded in an interpretation of politically bounded space congruent to the modern state apparatus that linked territoriality to the assertion of strategies of control over a geographical area.³¹ Whereas Raffestin's primary interest has been the composition of socio-spatial systems, rather than what happened to and within these systems later, Sack's interpretation of human territoriality invites us to study territoriality 'as a system that produces relations, rather than as one that is produced by relations'.³²

Alexander Murphy read Claude Raffestin and Robert Sack against each other and worked out a complementary understanding based on the recognition that not all socio-spatial systems are fluent in the same way.³³ This observation enables the geographer to put forward an interpretation that will be used throughout this book: 'When ideas and practices that create geographically differentiated spaces congeal into territorial projects rooted in the formalized control of space, they come to be shaped by a long-lasting highly sticky system that even though relationally constituted, derives much of its power from the properties of the system itself.'³⁴ The book therefore takes up the proposition of Charles A. Maier, a historian proliferating Robert Sack's ideas, to use territoriality as an alternative narrative for the modern era by means of analysing 'the emergence, ascendancy and crisis of territoriality', all the while paying tribute to Raffestin's relational approach in order to understand and compare dynamics of relations within certain of these processes over time.³⁵ This approach will become most clear in chapter four, where a detailed comparison is made of language learning struggles in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy in the late 1920s. The second axis of analysis, power and multiple loyalties, will make clear how in other periods of time the exertion of control was too prominent in order to set in motion complex dynamics of changeable interactions with regards to language learning.

Power and Multiple Loyalties

A second analytical axis consists of a combined reading of the concepts of power and multiple loyalties. As Charles A. Maier pointed out, in modern

thought, territory as bounded space was 'envisaged not just as an acquisition or as a security buffer, but as a decisive means of power and rule'.³⁶ Power was to be spread over the lands between state borders; these were to be firmly controlled by the power apparatus of modern states. As Claude Raffestin showed, however, relations between people played a crucial role in the creation and functioning of such a socio-spatial system. The second analytical axis brings together insights from historiographical literature on relations of loyalties with those of political science on power. Combining the concept of multiple loyalties with a deconstructive stance on power facilitates the situation of interwar language learning in places on the European continent more precisely within their respective historical contexts. Taken as a whole, this axis refines the comparative investigation of how negotiations over language learning in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy evolved over time after the switch in state sovereignty following the Treaty of Versailles.

This book offers a differentiated understanding of what power is and how it works. Power is defined as a certain system of power composed of both power structures and power strategies. Whereas structures are 'modes of limiting interaction, which create conditions of possibility',³⁷ strategies refer to the goal-oriented aspect of power. And while power structures can be observed as they are at a given moment in time, power strategies serve to keep these structures in place, or provoke them to change. Power has long been defined as either 'power over someone' or 'the power to do something', and these have been presented as different to each other, the former equating to power as domination, the latter power as emancipation. Much effort has been invested into understanding 'power over' as a multidimensional phenomenon. 'Power over' came to be seen as having different dimensions which are not mutually exclusive, but can appear within social processes in various constellations at different moments in time. Over the last decade, moreover, political scientists have developed an understanding of power beyond the dichotomist perception of domination and emancipation. Mark Haugaard has been influential for this book in his widening of the well-known framework of four dimensions of power as domination in order to include power as emancipation. In his analysis, Haugaard leans on Hannah Arendt's idea of communicative power emerging, as the philosopher wrote, 'whenever people get together and act in concert'.³⁸

Acting together in the public sphere is a possible interaction between individuals, groups or institutions within equal power relations. However, by systematically taking the position of the ruled, instead of the rulers, researchers found a whole gamut of coexisting and possibly partially overlapping practices, which individuals in the past used in order to ap-

prove, refute or resist specific power structures over time.³⁹ In order to stress the multiple character of such practices, as well as their changeability over time, they have been approached as expressions of multiple loyalties.⁴⁰ The concept of multiple loyalties is here preferred over the concept of identity, which presumes an essential stable core of an individual's personality; loyalties are by definition 'partial, mediated and contingent'.⁴¹ Loyalties are also relational. To put it most simply, only when orders articulated by rulers are followed by the ruled do they have consequences, and only when these orders are interpreted correctly will they generate the intended effect. When looking at the matter in a more complex way, the opposition between rulers and the ruled ought to be questioned, as not all rulers are equal among themselves; and nor do these rulers hold power over a homogeneous group of the ruled, but rather, mutual interdependencies among changing groups of rulers and the ruled appear at different moments in time. In addition, the motives of the ruled to engage may be multiple. Interpreting their acceptance of a power strategy issued from above as an act of passive obedience reduces the potential for obstinacy of historical actors, who through their behaviour could give another meaning to their actions; accepting or distancing themselves from a power structure or power strategy do not necessarily need to be opposite practices, but could appear simultaneously.⁴² With reference to Polish Upper Silesia, for example, Brendan Karch has already demonstrated that, despite the ardency of national activists, local inhabitants choosing a school for their children 'weighed their decisions against other values and consequences: the need for their children to learn German in a German-speaking community, the social isolation of students in the Polish schools, the quality of teacher instruction, or a desire to promote bilingual education'. Karch saw multiple loyalties in 'the accumulated choices that arise from such interpretations between nationalist activists and instrumentally minded Upper Silesians'.⁴³ Meanwhile, borderland inhabitants of the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy adopted the decisive strategy of 'a wait and see approach'.⁴⁴ As the historians Andreas Fickers and Christoph Brüll recently argued, looking away or ignoring did not mean inhabitants were simply doing nothing. On the contrary, they were choosing to do nothing as a deliberate strategy in order to articulate their discontent with the system of power as it unfolded at the time. Doing nothing was an act of 'situational opportunism', of exploiting 'the individual's room for manoeuvre on the basis of an assessment of what is considered opportune in a concrete situation'.⁴⁵

In order to come to a closer understanding of how relations of loyalty were influenced by power, their interaction within the four-dimensional framework of power will now be displayed in greater detail. This well-

known framework originally started off as the three-dimensional framework of power developed by Steven Lukes.⁴⁶ The one-dimensional view of power with which he begins his framework presents forceful domination. It is 'the ability of A to prevail over B, by making B do something which B would not otherwise have done'.⁴⁷ Haugaard, however, suggests that this form of power does not necessarily have to turn into a situation in which A wins what B loses, but that the process of power in itself can have emancipatory potential. Giving the example of a democratic regime, the political scientist shows that when A and B both stand for election, and A wins and B loses, the power structures of democracy are being reinforced, which in itself creates the opportunity for B to develop a power strategy for the future.⁴⁸ The shape of power structures and power strategies (to be understood as capable of inhering both 'power over' and/or 'power to') at a given moment in time determined the context in which subjects could express their loyalties by means of their practices, thereby adhering to, negotiating or rejecting a given system of power.

The one-dimensional view of power understood in Haugaard's sense, i.e. both as 'power over' and as 'power to', is of crucial importance in order to come to a deep understanding of language learning practices in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy. While this will be demonstrated in greater detail throughout the book, most prominently in chapter three, two examples serve to motivate the argument here. The supranational involvement of the League of Nations in the ruling of language learning in Polish Upper Silesia was both an example of the Great Powers' coercive domination over the new Polish nation-state and the paternalism with which various nation-states in Central and Eastern Europe, but not in Western Europe, were approached in the aftermath of the First World War. At the same time, however, the installation of this power structure served to ensure that German-speaking pupils could learn the language their parents called their mother tongue and encourage these pupils and their caregivers (teachers, pedagogues, politicians and clergymen) to develop a power strategy to maintain that opportunity after supranational involvement came to an end fifteen years later.

In the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, meanwhile, the system of power installed after the switch of state sovereignty was one of coercive domination in its purest form. Belgian politicians supported the installation of a colonial regime in the borderlands, where the Belgian Constitution did not apply. At the same time, however, it was envisioned that the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy would be steadily integrated into a country with a constitution respecting the diversity of its inhabitants. As a result, borderland inhabitants were granted more rights in choosing in which language their child could receive primary education

than was the case before the switch to Belgian state sovereignty, a fact even appreciated by the harshest critics of the colonial regime. The head of that regime was Herman Baltia (1920–1925), a Belgian military leader who had been made Royal High Commissioner of the new regions incorporated into the kingdom. The son of a Belgian general and a German mother, his methods of governing were considered quasi-dictatorial. Nevertheless, borderland inhabitants applauded the fact that he based the legitimacy of his regime more on traditional authority than on the rational-legal authority of modernisation, bureaucratisation and legalisation that had characterised the system of power in the German Empire. Traditional authority, as pointed out by Max Weber almost a century ago, leant on religiousness and people's respect for their ancestors.⁴⁹

In retrospect, one could be inclined to think that a clear linear mission towards integration within the Belgian Kingdom underscored transition policies, whereas in reality local rulers did not know how long the transition period was going to last and offered context-sensitive solutions to existing challenges on an ongoing basis.⁵⁰ For example, at the same time that a specific rule was issued forbidding borderland pupils from receiving their primary education in Germany, paradoxically enough, young borderland adults who had finished a teaching degree in Germany prior to the switch to Belgian state sovereignty, and who had thus been exposed to German nationalist ideas during their entire education, were invited to teach borderland pupils in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy.

A two-dimensional view of power, in the words of Lukes, 'allows for consideration of the ways in which decisions are prevented from being taken on potential issues over which there is an observable conflict of (subjective) interests'.⁵¹ The question here concerns why certain topics are discussed within political circles, whereas others are not. As Haugaard points out, whereas the mechanism of including and excluding is immanent to structuring in general, the outcome can appear different. These preventive, often unspoken tactics may take the form of 'power over' in the sense that they continually ignore the same people or ideas. On the other hand, a system of power may also be balanced on a mutual understanding between parties of what is politicised and what is not. The longer parties consider a reinforcement of such power structures advantageous, the more durable a system of power becomes.⁵² It goes without saying that the preventive tactics the two-dimensional view of power refers to also influence the changeability of loyalties that individuals and groups develop. When one can expect a certain balance of power to remain in place over time, loyalties are likely to become more consistent.

The two-dimensional view of power is the crux to understanding how the Belgian Kingdom functioned in the interwar years, and why the sys-

tem of power was so different from the one within the Polish nation-state. Notwithstanding the frequent government changes, the Belgian Kingdom presented a balanced system of power regarding the two domains crucial for interwar language learning, one being the relationship between the state and the Catholic Church, and the other between the state and parents. How to divide responsibilities over primary schooling between the state and the Catholic Church had been one of the biggest topics of political debate in the second half of the nineteenth century. The so-called School Wars had distilled a clear power structure with the church having the freedom to develop its activities within Catholic schools, which were and remained more numerous than state schools. Even after the implementation of compulsory education following the First World War, no political party was interested in reopening the debate. Within the new Polish nation-state, by contrast, the church and the state never ceased in their attempts to resolve satisfactorily the issue of responsibility for the language learning of primary school children.

A similar struggle could be observed between the state and the guardians of children (mostly fathers) entitled to choose a primary school. As will be shown in chapter three, in interwar Belgium a guardian had the right to decide what the mother tongue of his child was and send them to a school offering primary education in that language.⁵³ Of importance was the language the guardian mentioned, not the actual language the child spoke at home or other languages they knew. In the north of the country, there were some guardians who spoke Dutch at home but claimed their children spoke French in order to be able to send them to a French-speaking school, thus (as they believed) increasing their children's chances on the future job market. If a guardian's right to choose was not recognised, he could take his claim to court, and the guilty party could be obliged to pay a fine.⁵⁴ In Polish Upper Silesia, by contrast, the right of guardians to decide remained subject to debate throughout the interwar years, as representatives of the Polish state constantly challenged this right and eventually tried to overrule it, which they were able to do in 1937, when the legal framework of supranational control, the Geneva Convention, came to an end.

A three-dimensional view of power concerns the relationship between power and 'the consciousness of social actors'.⁵⁵ It covers the relationship between how power structures are reinforced or changed by means of power strategies and the way in which social actors give meaning to these phenomena. In the case of power as domination, a certain system of power remains unquestioned by the ruled, since the way in which power is structured and evolves is perceived as how things naturally are and is therefore considered acceptable. However, as Haugaard argues, the evo-

lution can also be made from a person or collective doing things ('practical consciousness') towards articulating the things done ('discursive consciousness'), a process that allows for a reflection upon structuration. It is in this 'consciousness raising' that Mark Haugaard sees the power of emancipation.⁵⁶

When comparing the situation of pupils learning how to read and write in German in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy in the early 1930s, the three-dimensional view of power helps to indicate a crucial difference. Whereas in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, the conditions for that learning process were a given and could therefore remain practical consciousness, in Polish Upper Silesia, children needed to take a test in order to be allowed that language training. The test can be seen as an act of consciousness raising in itself, in the sense that it had the potential to encourage borderland pupils to reflect upon their practices and influence their loyalties. Whether or not such practices, through which borderland pupils could come to question power structures and power strategies, were inherent to primary school systems had an influence on how loyalties were expressed and possibly adjusted.

Peter Digeser proposed adding the French philosopher Michel Foucault's view on the correlation between power and knowledge as a fourth dimension (he used the word 'face') to Steven Lukes' three-dimensional view of power.⁵⁷ In Foucault's words, this is 'a form of power that makes individuals subjects',⁵⁸ in which human behaviour is guided through discipline.⁵⁹ In this respect, his concept of governmentality is to be understood as a normalising technique of government to shape and discipline human behaviour through the internalisation of certain routinised beliefs and practices.⁶⁰ If understood as power as domination, this power strategy based on internal disciplinisation aims at the unreflective submissiveness of the individual. However, practices brought about by internalised discipline do not by definition have to create a situation in which A gains what B loses. Haugaard points out that an intrinsic characteristic of modernity includes a 'deferral of gratification through the internalisation of self-restraint'.⁶¹ In this view of power as emancipation, B can accept that A holds power over him or her because B feels guaranteed that this power will only be used within specific structured confinements, leading to outcomes that may also be beneficial for B.⁶²

In chapter five, I shall highlight the case of a Catholic school principal in Eupen. He conveyed the message that borderland pupils ought to submit to the way they were to internalise discipline in his school, and that parents were not entitled to offer any criticism. Given the balance of power between the church and the state within the Belgian Kingdom,

and the absence of non-Catholic schools in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, the Catholic school principal spoke from a hegemonic power position and could dictate his vision of disciplined loyalty to borderland pupils. It will also be shown how in Polish Upper Silesia, reform pedagogues instead wanted to find out more about the living conditions of borderland pupils, because they believed their research findings could help to develop didactic materials that more appropriately supported language learning practices, which would in turn lead to borderland pupils achieving better school results. That idea aligned with the ideology of the political regime at the time to privilege children who spoke Polish and expressed their loyalty towards the state to advance professionally. One of the regime's power strategies was to guide the future behaviour of borderland pupils through the knowledge being generated by scientists.⁶³

Microhistory within a Multilayered Context

The third and final axis of analysis within the framework of comparison this book provides is microhistory in a multilayered context. Microhistory has long held a minority status within professional historiography. Philipp Ther, for instance, compared the historiography of modern Europe to 'a commode, only consisting of national drawers. Within these drawers, there is a certain leeway for regional history, micro history, everyday life history and other fields'.⁶⁴ This book shares the argument that a microhistory needs to go beyond the analysis of one case within a local context (a focus not rarely associated with an endorsement of political separatism), and be approached as an interesting gateway to point to the limits of national loyalties in general.⁶⁵ Borderlands are especially useful objects of analysis, since limits within systems of power become more visible when a greater number of competing loyalty offers are on display.⁶⁶

In offering a comparative microhistory of borderlands within a multilayered context, this book invites us to leave the commode altogether, as it were, and to approach the late modern era as a time where various spatial frames, such as the imperial, national, local and the regional coexisted, interacted or overlapped.⁶⁷ In order to compare language learning in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, the wider context of local, regional, national, transnational, bilateral and supranational power interdependencies and multiple loyalties needs to be examined. In this way we shall be able to uncover how borderlands 'developed as spatial units alternative to, but not independent of, the political design defined by the administrative borders, whose importance is not denied but indeed remains pivotal for structuring and redefining the

regions themselves. The key point therefore is to analyse how these alternative geographies intertwined with political-administrative spatiality.⁶⁸

Recent historiography on Polish Upper Silesia has shed light on the limitations of programmes of nation-building in borderlands and has pointed to the prevalence of religious, ethnic, regionalist or other allegiances in the appropriation of collective belonging.⁶⁹ The argument goes that, with the depiction of the nation as Benedict Anderson's 'imagined political community' eagerly taken as an assumption, historians closed their eyes to phenomena outside these socially constructed collectives.⁷⁰ Arguing that the conviction of nineteenth- and twentieth-century nationalist thinkers should not determine our knowledge about the past, scholars have placed what came to be referred to as failed national projects at the centre of historical investigation.⁷¹ This enabled them to recognise the specificities of historical time and place for the shaping of collective belonging, as well as the inconsistency of nationalist motivations throughout the life course of individuals.⁷²

Most authors using a microhistorical approach favour foregrounding the complexity of mechanisms of nationalisation in Upper Silesia over developing concepts or models. Presenting Upper Silesia as a puzzling unique path (*Sonderweg*) in the history of nationalism, scholars have shown in great detail the volatile character of belonging in the region during the interwar period.⁷³ Political preferences, they warn, should not be seen as an expression of a fixed national identity. During Silesian post-plebiscite festivals throughout the interwar period, for instance, the political allegiances available to inhabitants could be appropriated to a discretionary degree on both sides of the border dividing the region between Poland and Germany.⁷⁴ Political and, as we have seen in the introduction, linguistic choices, moreover, did not clearly overlap. Whereas German-minded political parties in the Polish part of interwar Upper Silesia in the early 1920s received more votes than the number of German speakers listed in the 1910 census, when the economic situation in Poland stabilised, they saw their number of votes fall.⁷⁵ In contrast to political and linguistic articulations, religious preferences have been found to be decisive for the allegiances of a majority of people. This is sometimes presented as a static juxtaposition between 'the State's national-linguistic [basic interpretation] on the one hand, and the Church's confessional-religious on the other',⁷⁶ but more often referred to as 'the strength of transnational, regionalist and sub-national allegiances and of allegiances other than nationality, for instance, religion'.⁷⁷

In addition, many authors working on Upper Silesia have highlighted the importance of bilateral or supranational relationships. The concern of nationalists in both the Polish and German part of Upper Silesia to define

their own group in correlation to an imagined collective other, for example, is found to have had a destructive influence on the bilateral political dialogue between Poland and the Weimar Republic.⁷⁸ Scholars have also shown that the League of Nations had been set up precisely in order to defuse conflicts over the loyalties of borderland inhabitants by lifting them out of their regional and/or national environment.⁷⁹

The increasing body of historical studies has left the suitability of Upper Silesia for comparative research largely untested.⁸⁰ A symmetrical comparison of two case study borderlands for differences and similarities inevitably requires us to go beyond two of the concepts usually applied in historiography on Polish Upper Silesia, national indifference and regionalism, as these hold little explanatory value for the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy. A concept foreign to most historians working on borderlands, but all the more present in the work of geography and anthropology, on the other hand, that of the borderscape, can support a symmetric comparative microhistory in a multilayered context.

The concept of national indifference serves to unravel 'how and why people allied themselves politically, culturally and socially from the ground up' outside of imagined national communities as a reaction to modern nationalist politics, as well as how these allegiances changed over time.⁸¹ Although the concept was first applied to borderlands with a history in the Habsburg Empire, it later travelled, *inter alia*, to the desks of scholars dissecting the past of the Polish-German border region of Upper Silesia.⁸² In an attempt to avoid the normative assumption that the indifferent individual is to become a national citizen at some point in the future, the borderland people of Upper Silesia hitherto glossed over in mainstream historiography have also been referred to as non-national/anational groups, 'groups that are not defined and/or do not define themselves as nations, nationalities or somehow national'.⁸³ Scholars found proof of the importance of national indifference in the Upper Silesian plebiscite of 1921 stipulated by the Treaty of Versailles, which attempted to determine the national belonging of local inhabitants but failed to clarify matters.⁸⁴ The plebiscite was organised at a moment when German and Polish national agitation encountered a local population that had not yet come to think primarily in national categories.⁸⁵ The alternative, Upper Silesia as a nation-state project in itself, failed because it was devoid of a gradually developed and decisive political structure, as well as an influential mass media.⁸⁶

National indifference as an analytical category has recently been judged inadequate because of the plenitude of contradictory convictions harboured within Upper Silesia: 'Those who acted indifferently embraced many different 'isms' and behaviours – and sometimes had little in common.'⁸⁷

The concept also inevitably remains associated with nationalists and their perceptions of the world, as can be seen in archival documents. As Tara Zahra stated: 'The coherence of the category, I believe, ultimately lies in nationalists' own use of it to mobilise potential recruits'.⁸⁸ And lastly, the argument has been put forward that not enough attention is paid to the fact that, in an era where nation-states were the European norm, remaining nationally indifferent could have real consequences for borderland inhabitants.⁸⁹ In his comparison of violence in Upper Silesia and Ulster between 1918 and 1922, Tim Wilson proved that national indifference can be the cause of destructive actions and should therefore not be conceived as a desirable alternative to national identification.⁹⁰ In chapter four of this book, moreover, it will be seen how such destruction could continue in times of peace. Borderland pupils were not allowed to attend a school of their choice, and their parents could lose their jobs or be sent to prison if they did not opt for a specific primary school.

The (changeable over time, yet still binary) understanding of finding oneself inside or outside an imagined national community turned out to be unsuitable for shedding a comparative light on the multidimensional lifeworlds of borderland pupils in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy. A prevailing consensus among historians of Upper Silesia, for example, is that religious and national identifications in the interwar years were mostly distinct one from another. Throughout the nineteenth century, nationalist mobilisation which aimed at transforming local inhabitants of Upper Silesia into either Germans or Poles aggravated uncertainty in people about their national identifications. Despite the fact that the Catholic Church contributed to the essence of what the Polish nation stood for, just as the Protestant Church did for the German nation, local inhabitants of Upper Silesia saw in religion an alternative identification enabling them to position themselves above national understandings altogether.⁹¹ These dynamics often remained in place when Poland regained independence; its political representatives styled it a secular state and formulated ambitions in domains of public life that had traditionally been monopolised by the church.⁹²

Upon gaining independence in 1830, however, the major European rulers (the Habsburg Empire, the Russian Empire, Prussia, the United Kingdom and France) required the Belgian Kingdom to guarantee the religious rights of its citizens. Joining the kingdom almost a century later, local inhabitants of the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy therefore enjoyed more freedom of religion than they had been entitled to while living in the German Empire. In addition, borderland inhabitants did not adopt other possible sources of loyalty, be they linguistic, cultural or ethnic, in order to position themselves against nationalisms as a whole. Admittedly,

in prescribing a free use of languages, Belgian nationalists approached language significantly differently from how Polish nationalists did. That approach was nevertheless fervently contested by Flemish nationalists at the time the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy joined the Belgian Kingdom.⁹³ The fact that the Belgian nation-state later, from the early 1930s onwards, provided borderland pupils with more prosperous language learning conditions than the supranational legal framework controlled by the League of Nations serves as another example of why borderland inhabitants had no reason to protest against nationalisation by means of an attitude of national indifference.

Another branch of historical literature has looked at Upper Silesia's interwar past through the concept of regionalism. People who do not aspire to sovereignty or statehood, but express loyalty towards their regional history, have been reported to constitute a majority of the local inhabitants at the beginning of the interwar years, and their number only seriously dropped after Polish nationalist policies accelerated at the end of the 1930s.⁹⁴ Strong regional loyalties are found to have developed as a reaction to the cultural and political centralism practiced by competing German, Polish and Czech national movements since the nineteenth century, and to have been supported by an understanding of Upper Silesia as a region with a distinct historical past. That distinctiveness was not articulated through a strong regional political self-understanding, but by means of everyday religious practices bridging the linguistic divides various nationalists aimed to create.⁹⁵ In the interwar years, moreover, the transnational ambitions of German foreign policymakers – of Upper Silesia's 'external national homeland' – and the 'nationalising' policies of the young Polish nation-state, to use two concepts of Rogers Brubaker here, were not necessarily in competition with regionalist allegiances.⁹⁶ In the age of mass politics and mass education, it was not only the Polish, German and Czechoslovakian governments but also the governments of many other nation-states in Europe who chose those regional traditions they considered related to their national imagination in order to popularise their (trans)nationalist ideas.⁹⁷

Whereas interwar Polish Upper Silesia can be classified as a strong region, the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy certainly cannot.⁹⁸ Prior to the First World War, these areas had not witnessed a clash of different nationalisms. At stake for the minority of Prussian Walloons at the end of the nineteenth century, for example, was the desire to regain the freedom to use the Wallonian vernacular that they had enjoyed before the *Kulturkampf* within the Prussian state, not to bring about or endorse a Wallonian regionalism or Belgian nationalism across state borders.⁹⁹ The regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were never an entity with a

separate legal status before they joined the Belgian Kingdom, and regional understandings were weak and at the very least plural. The five years the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy functioned as the entity Eupen-Malmedy under the dictatorial regime of Herman Baltia could not foster the emergence of a common regional understanding, and as early as 1925 the decision was made to include the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy in the Belgian province of Liège. The dynamics between national and regional loyalties as articulated in language learning practices also developed differently in the case of Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy during the interwar years. Whereas in Polish Upper Silesia, representatives of the Polish nation-state tried to increase their power over borderland pupils, representatives of the Belgian nation-state continued to favour their pre-war power strategies of decentralisation and prevention. As a result, municipalities in Belgium's newest borderlands received much of the decision-making power over interwar primary schooling, as did the Catholic Church.

The concept of the borderscape can steer the investigation of the multilayered phenomenon of language learning in and beyond Polish Upper Silesia and the border regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, since it allows for a focus on the local level of the everyday life in the borderlands, while at the same time taking into consideration when and how bordering processes exceeded the borderlands. Border scholars have called into existence the concept of the borderscape in order to draw attention away from the spectacle of struggles at the border and within borderlands, and to focus on transient space instead. This entails tracking how, after the drawing of a state border line, the spatial division is given meaning through the construction and proliferation of discourses and practices in relation to, and in interaction with, perceptions, interests and strategies within certain levels of decision-making at different moments over time. The concept of the borderscape focuses on the dynamic location of the border as a result of shifts in systems of power and multiple loyalties, shifts driven by the multiplication of division inherent to human territoriality.¹⁰⁰

Rather than functioning as an empirical category, borderscapes are here considered a lens through which bordering processes can be approached. The word 'borderscape' unifies the words 'border' with the suffix '-scape', the latter having a double meaning.¹⁰¹ In the first interpretation, the suffix refers to the continuous multidimensional dynamics of 'shaping and carving' the border.¹⁰² In the second, the suffix relates to the border as it relates to the word 'land' in 'landscape'. As is the case with a landscape, a borderscape is 'a thing that is also the representation of the thing'.¹⁰³ Modern culture has developed a thinking about space through the landscape painting of the Dutch/Flemish school, where 'the landscape is reduced to

an image used by a contemplative subject kept at a distance', and later 'the initial reference to a genre of painting ended up being shifted to designate its real referent, the territory'.¹⁰⁴ That representation is the aggregate of historically affected and culturally embedded interpretations and reformulations of the border brought about through interactions between institutions and people at different levels of decision-making processes.¹⁰⁵ In order to reconstruct the borderscape of language learning in interwar borderland primary schools, this book follows the shuffling of papers concerning language learning on and across many tables, within individual borderland schools, city councils, provincial cabinets and national parliaments, all the way up to the International Court of Justice in the Hague.¹⁰⁶

Notes

1. Newman, 'On Borders', 13.
2. An exception has been Thomas Nail, who in his recent book *Theory of the Border* provides a theoretical framework explaining the historical conditions in which borders – which he understands as the fence, the wall, the cell and the checkpoint – originate (Nail, *Theory*, 12).
3. Paasi, 'Border Theory', 28.
4. Mezzadra and Neilson, *Border as Method*, 3.
5. Judson, 'Preface', XIV.
6. Stefanov, *Erfindung*, vol. 65, 7–16.
7. Haugaard and Goverde, 'Power and Space', 191.
8. Büsching, 'Aufstände', 144; Dietz, *Griff*, vol. 2; Piskorski, Hackmann and Jaworski, *Deutsche Ostforschung*; Struve, 'Geschichte und Gedächtnis', 3.
9. Ruland, 'Deutschtum', 21–68; Michalczyk, *Heimat*, 11.
10. Mishkova and Trencsényi, 'Introduction', 2.
11. Di Fiore, 'Production of Borders', 38.
12. Müller and Torp, 'Conceptualising', 613.
13. Di Fiore, 'Production of Borders', 39.
14. Nail, *Theory*, 7–8.
15. Van Houtum, 'Mask of the Border', 50.
16. See Asiawaju, 'Borderlands in Africa', 2.
17. DuVal, *Borderlands*, 3.
18. Price, *Dry Place*, 6.
19. Von Hirschhausen et al., *Phantomgrenzen*, 18.
20. Esch and von Hirschhausen, 'Wahrnehmen', 13.
21. Ther, 'Einleitung', XII.
22. Mezzadra and Neilson, *Border as Method*, 183.
23. Mohanty, *Feminism*, 2. Fickers and Brüll already used the concept *Zwischenräume* for their analysis of the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy; Fickers and Brüll, 'Zeit-Räume', 12–14.

24. For a detailed discussion of borders and borderlands as resources, see Feyissa and Hoehne, *Borders*.
25. *Ibid.*, 183; Teubner, 'Fragmented', 327–41.
26. Price, *Dry Place*, 118.
27. Raffestin, 'Space', 136.
28. *Ibid.*, 121.
29. Klauser, 'Thinking Through Territoriality', 110.
30. Raffestin, 'Space', 123.
31. Sack, *Human Territoriality*, 19.
32. Murphy, 'Entente Territorial', 167.
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Ibid.*, 169.
35. Maier, 'Consigning', 807.
36. *Ibid.*, 818.
37. Haugaard, 'Rethinking', 38.
38. Quoted in Arendt, *Crises*, 151.
39. Grandits, *Herrschaft*, 16; See Grandits, Clayer and Pichler, 'Introduction', 5.
40. Schulze Wessel, 'Loyalität', 10.
41. *Ibid.*, 2–3; Karch, *Nation*, 14.
42. Lüdtke, 'Einleitung', 13–14 and 50.
43. Karch, *Nation*, 20–21.
44. O'Connell, *Annexation*, 144.
45. Fickers and Brüll, 'Experiment', 22.
46. Lukes, *Power*, 19.
47. Haugaard, 'Rethinking', 35.
48. *Ibid.*, 38.
49. Bendix, *Max Weber*, vol. 2, 382–83.
50. Grandits and Brunnbauer, 'Ambiguous Nation', 23.
51. Lukes, *Power*, 25.
52. Haugaard, 'Rethinking', 41.
53. de Vroede, 'Language in Education', 116.
54. Mallinson, *Power*, 114.
55. Haugaard, 'Rethinking', 42.
56. *Ibid.*, 44.
57. Digeser, 'Fourth Face'.
58. Foucault, 'Subject and Power', 212.
59. Mezzadra and Neilson, *Border as Method*, 193; Foucault, 'Meshes of Power', 158.
60. Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke, 'Foucault's Lectures', 1–33.
61. In this respect, Mark Haugaard refers to Max Weber's work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1976, 2nd edition) and Norbert Elias' work *The Civilizing Process* (1994), and concludes: 'While the theories are different, both Elias and Weber agree that the deferral of gratification through the internalization of restraint is intrinsic to modern discipline' (Haugaard, 'Rethinking', 49).
62. Haugaard, 'Rethinking', 50.
63. *Ibid.*
64. Ther, 'Einleitung', X.
65. See Stefanov, *Erfindung*, vol. 65, 14.
66. Ther, 'Schlesisch', 171.
67. Di Fiore, 'Production of Borders', 48.
68. *Ibid.*, 49.

69. See Bjork et al., 'Introduction', 6; Polak-Springer, *Recovered*; Karch, *Nation*.
70. Anderson, *Imagined*; Zahra, 'Imagined Non-Communities', 94–96.
71. Kamusella, 'Upper Silesia', 10.
72. Judson, 'Preface'.
73. Bjork et al., 'Introduction', 1; Michalczyk, *Heimat*, 17; Struve, 'Geschichte und Gedächtnis', 31.
74. Michalczyk, *Heimat*, 269.
75. Ther, 'Schlesisch', 169–202.
76. Novikov, *Shades*, 56.
77. Bjork et al., 'Introduction', 1.
78. Michalczyk, *Heimat*, 85; Karch, 'Polish Nationalism', 165.
79. Eser, 'Volk, Staat, Gott!', 20; Raitz von Frentz, *A Lesson Forgotten*, 12.
80. Kamusella, 'Upper Silesia', 27. For examples of comparative studies, see Wilson, *Frontiers*; Kaczmarek, 'Zwischen Regionalismus'.
81. Zahra, 'Imagined Non-Communities', 118.
82. See Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*; King, *Budweisers*.
83. Kamusella, 'Upper Silesia', 14–15.
84. Bjork et al., 'Introduction', 6.
85. Lesiuk, 'Entstehung und Entwicklung', 43.
86. Ther, 'Einleitung', XXI.
87. Karch, *Nation*, 17.
88. Zahra, 'Imagined Non-Communities', 104.
89. Karch, *Nation*, 17.
90. See Polak-Springer's review of Wilson's book, Polak-Springer, 'Violence', 1–4.
91. Bjork, *Neither German*; Lamberti, *State*, 40; Porter, 'Thy Kingdom Come', 238–39.
92. Schulze Wessel, *Revolution*.
93. The concept of national indifference is not without any explanatory value for Belgian history. Maarten Van Ginderachter, for example, discovered that Flemish nationalists complained about the lack of interest they encountered among ordinary people at the end of the nineteenth century (Van Ginderachter, *Het rode vaderland*, 212–13).
94. Ther, 'Schlesisch', 170.
95. Struve, 'Erfahrung', 141.
96. Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 55–58.
97. Ther, 'Spell', 85; Polak-Springer, *Recovered*, 13ff.
98. For a discussion on strong and weak regions, see Sundhaussen, 'Šumadija', 277–312.
99. Scharte, *Preußisch*, 133–37.
100. Brambilla et al., 'Introduction', 2.
101. Dell'Agnese and Amilhat Szary, 'Introduction', 5.
102. Brambilla, 'Critical Potential', 23.
103. Dell'Agnese and Amilhat Szary, 'Introduction', 10.
104. Brambilla, 'Critical Potential', 23.
105. Dell'Agnese and Amilhat Szary, 'Introduction', 10.
106. Earlier interpretations of the concept of the borderscape include presenting the 'borderscape as an area, shaped and reshaped by transnational flows, that goes beyond the modernist idea of clear-cut national territories' (as put forward by Arjun Appadurai), and 'offering an image corresponding more or less to a border region' (by A. Harbers and Gabi Dolff-Bonekämper); see Dell'Agnese and Amilhat Szary, 'Introduction', 7.

MAKING THE BORDER



When Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy joined, respectively, the Polish state and the Belgian Kingdom, the solely German-speaking school systems from before were abolished, and two sorts of schools were set up in order to separate children according to their supposed vernacular. Linguistic differences were separated, spatialised and controlled in schools. Language learning in primary schools played a pivotal role in transforming these pieces of land from spots on a map of Europe spread out on a table in Versailles into lived social spaces.¹ After the state border lines of the interwar European continent had been drawn, establishing and implementing rules on the teaching and use of languages in borderland primary schools became crucial techniques for making the border. This chapter will demonstrate how in both Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, language learning became the border.

Different aims lay at the basis of language learning rules in both case study borderlands. The ultimate aim for many Polish nationalists was to realise normative isomorphism: the equation of one nation with one language and one religion.² In a country where a third of the population did not have Polish as their mother tongue, they wanted to raise as many monolingual Polish-speaking future citizens as possible.³ However, as will be elaborated in this chapter, in Polish Upper Silesia, they were bound by bilateral and supranational agreements stipulating separate schools for pupils not having Polish as their mother tongue. Meanwhile, in Belgium, where teaching in the vernacular (whether that be French, Dutch or German) enjoyed a wide political consensus, the ultimate dream of most political representatives was not that all primary school pupils throughout the country be taught in the same language. Instead, contention arose over foreign language training. Policies and practices in this area laid bare the fact that French continued to be the dominant language in Belgian politics and high culture.⁴

Notes for this chapter begin on page 111.

The first years after the switch in state sovereignty are analysed by means of concepts discussed within the framework of comparison in the second chapter of this book. From the first axis of comparison, borders and human territoriality, this chapter borrows the processual understanding of borders (the bordering), a relational approach towards the human-made creation and functioning of borders, and the notion that former state borders can continue to influence everyday life long after they have ceased to exist (the phantom border). The second axis of comparison, power and multiple loyalties, enables us to make clear how multiple loyalties were expressed within newly developed, recovered or reassembled power structures and power strategies. It will show how power at the time was understood in what have later analytically been referred to as the one-dimensional and two-dimensional views of power. The influence of the third axis of comparison, microhistory within a multilayered context, can be found in the attention paid to local developments, such as the implementation of language learning rules within single borderland primary schools, as well as the focus on the practices of individual borderland teachers. The significance of these local practices for the interwar European political set-up can be illustrated through a wider historical contextualisation. The analysis demonstrates that, although the making of the border through language learning in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy brought about two different systems of power, it nevertheless instilled common characteristics in borderland schooling.

Drawing the State Border Line

The existence of Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy came about (either being initiated or at least discussed, negotiated and confirmed) as a result of the remapping of the European continent during the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. Both case study borderlands joined their new states when state border lines were redrawn as administrative entities set apart from the mainland, to which a set of special legal rules applied. Although Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy constituted special singular entities within unitary states, their nature could hardly have differed more. Many partners were involved in the creation of Polish Upper Silesia as an autonomous entity differing from the rest of Poland. The shape of the unique legal status of the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, on the other hand, was decided upon by one person. In both cases, special administrative entities were set up in order to defuse the powder keg. Policymakers

indicated potential conflicts of interests and developed power strategies to prevent people from making decisions to the detriment of a so-constructed 'other'.⁵

Polish Upper Silesia and the State Border Line

The way in which peacemakers in Paris in 1919 made decisions over the lands where they noticed potential conflicts of interests differed with regards to Central and Eastern Europe and Western Europe.⁶ Poland was the first in a list of Central and Eastern European states for which the acceptance of a minority treaty was made a condition for its international recognition as a nation-state.⁷ The work of the committee drawing the borders of the newly independent Polish state led to an international policy on the protection of what came to be called national minorities.⁸ The Minority Treaty, concluded on 28 June 1919, called on the Polish state to guarantee the protection of life, liberty and religious freedom for all inhabitants.⁹ More specifically, Polish citizens belonging to national minorities were entitled to use their language and to finance their own churches and schools. Their rights were copied into the Polish Constitution of 1921 and repeated in the Constitution of 1935. Article 9 of the Minority Treaty stated that where a considerable proportion of guardians of children in a municipality expressed the wish to have their children taught in their mother tongue, the state was required to provide such education.¹⁰ This right was restricted, however, to the German-speaking minority in Poland created as a result of the border changes brought about by the Versailles Treaty.¹¹

Because the concept of minority was interpreted differently by the authorities in Poland and Germany, the representatives of these minorities themselves, and the League of Nations, intense debates about who was entitled to national minority rights flared up immediately after the Minority Treaty came into effect. Polish authorities defined a minority based on what they called objective criteria, such as language, religion or culture, but differed in their opinion on the place of minorities within the new Polish state. The right-wing National Democrats, under the leadership of Roman Dmowski, nourished the idea of a linguistically unified and Roman Catholic nation put forward by Polish nationalists in the nineteenth century.¹² The ideal was to create an ethnolinguistically homogeneous nation-state, in which inhabitants spoke a standardised national language and had no command of other languages or dialects.¹³ Dmowski, in addition, considered Catholicism 'not an appendix to Polishness, a kind of specific colour, but something grounded in its soul, constituting this soul to a great extent'.¹⁴ A more inclusive stance towards

inhabitants speaking other tongues, nonetheless characterised by an imperialist belief in the attractive potential of Polish culture, on the other hand, informed the federal agenda of Józef Piłsudski, one of the founders of the Polish independent state, and his left-wing followers for most of the interwar period.¹⁵ German authorities, meanwhile, held their own subjective interpretation of minorities. In the contested Polish peripheral territories, some of the self-defined German-speaking minority inhabitants put themselves forward as spokespersons for what they presented as a homogeneous ethnic community, a *Volksgruppe*.¹⁶ The League of Nations, lastly, envisioned itself as a protector of minority rights, but it lacked an effective decision-making process, as well as any powers of legal enforcement.¹⁷

Back in Versailles, decision-makers had not reached a conclusion as to whether Upper Silesia should remain German or become Polish. Eventually, they pinned their hopes on a plebiscite giving local inhabitants the possibility to determine to which state they wanted to belong.¹⁸ Between the signing of the Treaty in June 1919 and the plebiscite in March 1921, Polish activists organised two uprisings against German rule which were quenched with the support of Entente militaries. In order to mobilise local inhabitants to vote in their favour, Germany elevated the plebiscite territory to the position of a separate province. As a response, the Polish side issued a constitutional act (the Organic Statute of the Silesian Voivodeship) granting the region an autonomous status if it were to join the Polish state. It also signed the new Constitution and the Treaty of Riga in the week preceding the plebiscite in order to give the impression of a well-organised state.¹⁹ The Treaty of Riga provided people living in Poland and belonging to what was defined as the Ukrainian, Byelorussian and Lithuanian minorities, as well as people of Polish descent on the other side of the border, with the right to nurture their native tongue, culture and schools.

The Silesian plebiscite was the biggest experiment in self-determination in modern European history, but instead of offering a clear outcome, the behaviour of voters left many things unclear.²⁰ In the Lublinitz/Lubliniec district, for example, while 53.1 per cent of the 29,195 voters expressed the desire to remain part of Germany, including the local inhabitants from the biggest cities Lublinitz/Lubliniec and Guttentag/Dobrodzień, the city dwellers of Woischnik/Woźniki, located farther east, voted to become part of Poland.²¹

In a time when the use of language was put forward as the primary indicator of national belonging, the outcome of the plebiscite was at the very least confusing. The last census conducted in the German Empire before the First World War, for example, when asking about inhabitants' mother tongue, had indicated that 57 per cent of the Upper Silesian population spoke Polish (with bilingual speakers being classified as German

speakers).²² Despite the dissatisfaction of many local inhabitants with the outcome, the League of Nations nevertheless accepted the outcome of the plebiscite.²³ In the meantime, concerns about the rumoured location of the future state border line between Germany and Poland fuelled a third uprising in May 1921. The battle reached a level of violence and atrocity unseen in any of the other territories negotiated in Paris in 1919, and unseen by local inhabitants during the First World War. The region was plunged into a civil war driven by paramilitary forces fighting for the German or Polish sides more out of a hunger for land and industry than out of nationalist incentives.²⁴ The violence that killed a thousand men, women and children served to establish a border: to install a line of division where it had previously been absent.²⁵

Splitting Upper Silesia according to the plebiscite outcome was impossible. In the Lublinitz/Lubliniec district, for example, the voting outcome in villages did not adhere to the West-East divide so easily recognisable in the cities of the district. In Schemrowitz/Szemrowice, for example, a village to the west of Guttentag/Dobrodzień, the majority voted in favour of Polish state sovereignty, whereas in the village of Lissau/Lisów, located farther east, only a minority did so.²⁶ Wojciech Korfanty, a politician with a history in German parliaments, who was one of the Polish leaders of the Third Silesian Uprising, and who would later serve as the Deputy Prime Minister of Poland in the autumn of 1923, proposed a division line running through Upper Silesia according to which the whole Lublinitz/Lubliniec district would become Polish. His plan was acceptable to French political representatives, who favoured the idea of a great Poland, but not the Italians or the British, who were concerned about Germany's economic viability.²⁷ Finally, the League of Nations agreed that Germany would receive 71 per cent of the Upper Silesian territory and 54 per cent of its people, but Poland would receive the most heavily industrialised part. The Lublinitz/Lubliniec district was cut into two. Lublinitz/Lubliniec, Woischnik/Woźniki, and the lands around them, including the villages of Lissau/Lisów and Koschentin/Koszęcin, in total 700 km², were transferred to Poland. The city of Guttentag/Dobrodzień and its surroundings, including the village of Schemrowitz/Szemrowice, covering over 314 km², remained in Germany.²⁸

Upon the division, local inhabitants could choose their citizenship and move to the other part of Upper Silesia, as a result of which Polish Upper Silesia lost approximately 175,000 local inhabitants. Their number was, however, compensated for by immigrants from other places in Poland.²⁹ Moreover, a new treaty, the Polish-German Treaty on Upper Silesia, most commonly referred to as the Geneva Convention, was signed. Aiming to resolve the ambiguous interpretations the Minority Treaty had seeded, it

conclusively put forward the subjective definition of a minority.³⁰ It listed the rights to which minorities inhabiting the former Prussian parts of Silesia (and hence not the southern part, which had belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire) were entitled for fifteen years.

With regards to primary school education, the Geneva Convention repeated the rules laid down in the Minority Treaty, giving guardians the right to freely declare the mother tongue of their children (Article 131), requiring the Polish state to finance minority schools provided they had at least forty pupils and a German-speaking teaching branch in a Polish school where a minimum of eighteen pupils volunteered (Articles 96 and 106), and allowing the existence of private minority schools.³¹ In return, Article 133 stated that 'in lessons given at school, the national and intellectual qualities [should not be] improperly depreciated in the eyes of the pupils'.³² Where it differed from the Minority Treaty, however, was in the establishment of a Mixed Commission to supervise the implementation of the Geneva Convention. Consisting of German and Polish government representatives, this was headed by Felix Calonder, a Swiss citizen.³³ The autonomous status of Polish Upper Silesia contributed to its special status. Since the Silesian Parliament held independent decision-making power over policies such as education, pupils in Polish Upper Silesia, for example, continued to start school at the age of six, a year earlier than in the rest of Poland.³⁴

In the first years of the Polish Republic, policymakers in Warsaw had more than enough on their plate without interfering in Polish Upper Silesia's educational policy. The state border lines of the newly established Polish state gradually took shape between 1918 and 1923 by means of a series of wars and conflicts in the north, east, south and west: the Polish-Lithuanian War (approx. 1919–1920); the Polish-Ukrainian War (1918) and the Polish-Soviet War that reached the city of Warsaw (1919–1921); the Polish-Czechoslovak War (1919) and the Silesian Uprisings; and the Greater Polish Uprising (1918–1919). Within these wars, central national authorities often lost control over the local paramilitary groups to which they had 'outsourced' state power, and which were operating in the borderlands according to their own standards and incentives.³⁵

In addition, Poland's economy was in a deplorable state. In 1920, Polish industrial output amounted to less than half of what had been produced on the same territory when it belonged to the German, Russian or Habsburg Empires before the outbreak of the First World War.³⁶ Poland and Yugoslavia suffered more war devastation than any other country in Central Europe, and both faced the challenge of integrating the different economic structures they inherited from pre-war political entities.³⁷ European states mostly needed to take care of themselves; the aid programmes

financed with overseas money did not substantially resolve Europe's problems.³⁸ As was the case with most other countries, Poland lacked raw materials and food, as well as the money to import them.³⁹ The state took out loans with the Polish State Loan Bank, but in 1923 inflation accelerated dramatically.⁴⁰ Polish Upper Silesia was less affected by these developments because the region enjoyed the highest amount of capital per capita, boasted the best industrial infrastructure and school facilities of the entire country, and benefited from a three-year duty exemption for the goods it exported to Germany.⁴¹

Besides state border and economic problems, political life was also a source of turmoil. Poland found itself in a deep crisis when the first Polish president, Gabriel Narutowicz, whose supportive stance towards national minorities was opposed by National Democrat politicians, was murdered in December 1922, five days after taking office.⁴² When Germany and Russia eased diplomatic relations in 1922, moreover, uncertainty about the stability of the new Polish borders became widespread.⁴³ Within this political climate, universal suffrage and compulsory education were implemented. A massive task lay ahead. The overall percentage of children not attending primary school amounted to 36.9 per cent in 1922–1923, and while state administration representatives claimed to have reduced this figure to 17.4 per cent in 1925–1926, the real number was most likely higher.⁴⁴ Whereas some of the regions in Poland had illiteracy rates that were among the highest in Europe (officials estimated an average illiteracy rate of 50 per cent, 61 per cent in Eastern Poland and 40 per cent in the former Galician part), Upper Silesia had a long tradition of compulsory education and boasted the lowest illiteracy rate in interwar Poland (10 per cent in 1922–1923, and 3.9 per cent in 1925–1926).⁴⁵

Eupen-Malmedy and the State Border Line

Even more than in the case of Polish Upper Silesia, the drawing of Belgium's new eastern state border line was driven by geopolitical decisions. Initially, Belgian representatives travelled to Versailles with the megalomaniacal ideas of a range of Belgian intellectuals in their heads, most prominently Pierre Nothomb. When they found themselves in exile in France during the First World War, they formulated expansionist claims towards the Duchy of Luxembourg and wished to negotiate free access to the Scheldt River with the Netherlands as compensation for Belgians' heroic war efforts.⁴⁶ In Versailles, however, Belgium's image rapidly changed from a brave innocent ally to a greedy opportunist. The initial surge of empathy for small nations, along with the willingness to satisfy their aspirations, soon began to run out.⁴⁷ Belgium's meagre successes during the

peace negotiations have also been explained by the lack of diplomatic expertise among politicians who had been working for a neutral country.⁴⁸

During the Paris Peace Conference, the decision was made to create a double military buffer zone against German expansionism. The regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, a roughly 1,000-square-kilometre piece of land of no significant economic importance, as well as Neutral Moresnet, the Belgian-Prussian condominium that arose under the Treaty of Vienna in 1816 and which had been annexed by Germany during the First World War, were given to the Belgian Kingdom.⁴⁹ On the other side of the new Belgian-German frontier, Belgian troops continued to occupy a part of the Rhineland.⁵⁰ Although Belgian politicians agreed upon a buffer as a geopolitical strategy, and the enlargement of the Belgian Kingdom to the east was considered a deserved reward for the country's efforts during the First World War, support for the annexation within Belgian political circles was not unambiguous.⁵¹

While most politicians were concerned the annexation would complicate political and juridical practices within the Belgian Kingdom, depending on their perspective, this concern resulted in either the endorsement of or opposition to the proposed annexation. The Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, the liberal politician Paul Hymans, for example, worried that the newly acquired regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were mainly inhabited by Catholics. With universal suffrage being introduced in Belgium in 1918, the men joining the kingdom were expected to express loyalty to the Catholic Church when voting, thus increasing support for the Belgian Catholic Party.⁵² The francophone leader of the Belgian delegation, François Ganshof, on the other hand, argued for the importance of limiting the number of German speakers joining the kingdom, as they might increase language tensions between French and Dutch speakers.⁵³

Following the Versailles Treaty, in January 1920 Neutral Moresnet was incorporated into Belgium and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were pulled out of the administrative unit of Aix-la-Chapelle (Aachen).⁵⁴ Instead of a plebiscite, the architects of Europe's interwar set-up in Versailles had agreed on an unusual procedure: a consultation (*consultation populaire*).⁵⁵ In the first months of 1920, Belgian authorities opened a register in which local inhabitants of these three regions could write their names if they wanted their territory to stay in Germany.⁵⁶ At the end of the consultation, in July 1923, only 271 out of the 33,726 inhabitants entitled to vote had signed, as a result of which the region remained Belgian.⁵⁷ The procedure led to locals disputing the democratic character of the annexation throughout the entire interwar period. When in 1925 they received the right to vote in national elections, this dispute carried over into the political arena.⁵⁸

There are probably no better indications that the national minority rights designed at French negotiation tables were not universal. In Central and Eastern Europe, national minorities were to be given the right to vote, but in Western Europe, there were, legally speaking, no national minorities to begin with. Expansions by Allied powers were considered a deserved and eternal compensation for their war efforts, and were not to be disturbed by the dissenting voices of local inhabitants. National minorities in Western Europe were not named. They had no body to appeal to. It was as if they did not exist.

Meanwhile, the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy also entered Belgium under an autonomous regime, but the meaning of autonomy could hardly have been more different. Belgian authorities installed a transitional regime in the separate legal entity called Eupen-Malmedy using a well-practiced method. Within days of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles on 28 June 1919, the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were put under the supervision of Baron Henri Delvaux de Fenffe (1863–1947), governor of the province of Liège at the time, although this supervision would only come into effect after the treaty had been ratified by the Belgian government and signed by German authorities.⁵⁹ In the autumn of 1919, de Fenffe was replaced by Herman Baltia, the son of a Luxembourg father and a German mother, a Belgian lieutenant-general with experience in colonial service in Congo and a career in the Belgian army in the First World War.⁶⁰ Under his rule, Eupen-Malmedy became the only institutionalised colonial polity on the European continent. In January 1920, upon being given legislative and executive control over a region to which the Belgian Constitution was not applicable, he was told by Belgium's First Minister Léon Delacroix, 'You will be like a governor of a colony, but a colony with direct contact with the metropolis.'⁶¹

Delacroix was happy enough to hand over the responsibility for Eupen-Malmedy. With no agreements being made in Versailles on the amount of reparation debts Germany owed to Belgium, Belgian policymakers needed to get to work on the reconstruction of their ravaged country themselves.⁶² Although the war damage was significant, especially at the former front line in the province of Western Flanders, when put in perspective, the task lying ahead was less difficult than in the newly founded Polish state. With the exception of the Belgian-German border, all of Belgium's state borders were unchallenged by its neighbours. In addition, the guns had fallen silent.

Eupen-Malmedy was initially much better off than most places elsewhere in Belgium. The borderlands had come out of the war undamaged, exported 90 per cent of locally produced goods to Germany, and were exempted from export duties for five years.⁶³ Although severely affected by

the war, Belgian production reached its pre-war level by as early as 1924, because strategic sectors such as the coal mines and the port of Antwerp had survived the war largely undamaged and the population agreed to higher taxation. But the Belgian currency remained unstable.⁶⁴

Besides the economy, politics was the second major concern within the Belgian Kingdom. The war had mobilised the masses for political issues, and universal male suffrage was introduced in 1918.⁶⁵ After the Catholic Party had monopolised rule for thirty years, the political landscape became characterised by rapidly changing coalitions of the Liberal, Socialist and Catholic parties; twenty-five governments ruled Belgium between 1918 and 1940.⁶⁶

Since Belgian politicians were mainly occupied with internal affairs, Herman Baltia had a free hand in Eupen-Malmedy. He was controlled by neither a supranational nor a national body of sovereignty (although his budget needed to be approved by the Belgian Parliament). He granted the local population Belgian citizenship and had their German citizenship revoked (although some opted to retain their German citizenship).⁶⁷ Baltia's policy led to the outmigration of almost 5,000 borderland inhabitants within the first years, with former state officials and professional tradesmen in particular leaving for Germany.⁶⁸ Once the state border line was drawn and people had moved in or out, decisions about the languages offered in borderland primary schools became a prominent way of making the border. Given the existence of compulsory education in Prussia and, later, the German Empire, Baltia's major concern did not need to be the fight against illiteracy, as it was in many other places in Belgium.⁶⁹ Whereas illiteracy in the Belgian Kingdom had amounted to 17 per cent before the establishment of compulsory education, a major political effort during the 1920s resulted in a significant reduction in that figure.⁷⁰

From early on, Baltia engaged himself in the task of organising education, as he was convinced it could win over the minds of local children and ensure their support for the Belgian regime.⁷¹ A report had already been written in July 1919 at the behest of his predecessor de Fenffe emphasising the need to take control over borderland schools as an essential first step for the transitional government.⁷²

The crucial question Herman Baltia faced was how tolerant to be in offering primary education in German, at a time when the status of Dutch in Belgian education was being debated. At the end of 1918, Flemish activists had published a list of language demands in what they called their minimum political programme, which included the possibility of teaching Dutch in all branches and grades of education.⁷³ Apart from a language law in 1921 allowing Dutch and German to be used as an administrative language at a local level, however, it would take until the end of the 1920s

before Flemish activists experienced an electoral breakthrough and could push for a realisation of their minimum programme.⁷⁴

In the first years after the war, a broader support for the proliferation of Dutch in education was lacking because it reminded people of the clumsy *Flamenpolitik* of the occupier.⁷⁵ Belgian nationalism, on the other hand, had been galvanised by the experience of the First World War, when citizens had taken up arms for the first time since the country's independence.⁷⁶ Baltia made plain his views on the importance of education and language in January 1920, expressing a desire to organise 'a kind of education . . . that makes the French language and Belgium loved and appreciated'.⁷⁷

In sum, after the drawing of state border lines, rules and practices in both borderlands served to demarcate the meaning and influence of the state border line in space.⁷⁸ From a place where all pupils were taught in German, the two case study borderlands evolved into places where schools, or at least branches, offering teaching in two different languages were established. Language differences were anticipated and spatialised in the public sphere. Before describing the process of making borders through language learning in the early 1920s, I shall discuss here decisions concerning language regulations for primary school education upon the installation of compulsory education in Poland and Belgium.

Compulsory Education and Language Politics in Poland and Belgium

In both the new Polish state and the Belgian Kingdom, compulsory education was introduced together with universal suffrage shortly after the First World War.⁷⁹ In both countries, primary education was to be offered in the mother tongue of the child, and the guardians of children were responsible for indicating what that mother tongue was.⁸⁰ This mechanism, however, created tensions whenever the mother tongue of the child was not considered the language(s) of the nation.⁸¹ Regulating access to teaching in German and the conditions of (foreign) language training turned out to be crucial in the attempts to resolve the issue, whereas questions concerning how pupils were to be taught or learn their languages were considered less essential.

Poland

Although in the newly established Polish state a third of the population did not have Polish as their mother tongue,⁸² within the first years of compulsory primary schooling, most pupils were already receiving their

training in Polish, and not all pupils speaking a language other than Polish were being granted the same chance to be taught in their mother tongue. The first official statistical data gathered by Polish authorities for the 1922–1923 school year showed that 83 per cent of pupils were taught in Polish, and that although Ukrainian speakers were more numerous than German speakers, the number of schools offering teaching in Ukrainian was relatively smaller than the number of schools offering teaching in German. Whereas 83 per cent of the schools in Poland offered teaching in Polish, 11.2 per cent provided teaching in Ukrainian (also called Ruthenian at the time), and 4.1 per cent in German.⁸³ But among the German-speaking children living in Poland, important differences could be noticed. Those living in Eastern Poland were not seen as requiring different treatment from the more numerous Slavic linguistic minorities they lived among, were not protected by Article 9 of the Minority Treaty, and were considered of marginal economic importance.⁸⁴ As a result, only a third of these children received primary school education in their mother tongue. In contrast, in Greater Poland and West Prussia, an estimated 50 per cent of German-speaking children received teaching in German, and in Polish Upper Silesia, almost all German-speaking children could attend schools offering teaching in German.⁸⁵

Policymakers in Poland increased the percentage of the national budget spent on education from 2 to 10 per cent in 1923 and launched a reform to reduce monolingual teaching in a language other than Polish in schools for children not protected by Article 9 of the Minority Treaty.⁸⁶ The reform was initiated by a National Democrat, Stanisław Grabski.⁸⁷ Political representatives of the *Endecja* (or National Democrats) were in favour of what they called a national upbringing (*wychowanie narodowe*). This idea had developed among the Polish elite during the nineteenth century and encompassed such virtues as speaking Polish, being Roman Catholic, and patriotism towards the imagined fatherland.⁸⁸ Now that a Polish independent state had arisen, they used state institutions in order to turn inhabitants into good Poles. Józef Piłsudski and his followers, meanwhile, centralised education around the concept of state upbringing (*wychowanie państwowe*). According to its political ideology, the state was superior to national groups.⁸⁹ Pupils could have other languages or religions as long as these did not interfere with the mission to establish a modern centralised state. As a result of Grabski's reform, from 1924 onwards, a school could operate in a minority language only on the condition that 25 per cent of the local inhabitants spoke that language and could provide evidence that 40 children wanted to attend the school. If, however, the guardians of 20 children in a school district requested teaching in Polish, all of the children in that school were to be taught in two languages.⁹⁰ As

a result of Grabski's reform, most of the primary schools offering teaching in Ukrainian changed to bilingual schools offering teaching in Polish and Ukrainian.⁹¹ In Poland's most eastern province (Województwo Tarnopolskie), for example, statistics revealed that, whereas in the 1911–1912 school year, 405 schools had offered teaching in Polish, and 704 in Ukrainian, only a year after the *Lex Grabski* came into effect, the number of Ukrainian schools had already dropped to 254, while 304 bilingual Polish-Ukrainian schools had been established (alongside the increased number of Polish-speaking schools, of which there were now 754). Five years later, the number of Polish-speaking schools had fallen (to 653), as had the number of Ukrainian-speaking schools (to 144), but the number of bilingual schools had increased to 504.⁹²

In contrast to Polish Upper Silesia, the rights of children to receive education in Ukrainian could be overruled because they were not safeguarded by supranational law. When in 1925, for example, the guardians of 42 children in the village of Bartatów (Powiat Ogródek Jagielloński, Województwo Lwowskie) opted for primary education in Ukrainian, compared with the parents of 29 children preferring Polish, the district administration decided not to establish a Ukrainian-speaking school to be attended by both sets of children. Instead, they interviewed the first set of parents, who were pressured into saying that it was a bilingual school they sought.⁹³ Whereas the local struggle against Polonisation could take a similar form to the one in Polish Upper Silesia in the interwar years, there could also be marked differences. The Ukrainian equivalent of the organisation responsible for the education of the German minority in Polish Upper Silesia, the German Upper Silesian National Association of Polish Silesia for Minority Rights Protection (Deutschoberschlesischer Volksbund für Polnisch-Schlesien zur Wahrung der Minderheitsrechte – hereinafter Volksbund), was an organisation called Native School (Ridna Skola), which coordinated a network of 21 privately run Ukrainian-speaking schools in 1925–1926⁹⁴ and campaigned for education in Ukrainian. The organisation was less well-funded than the Volksbund, but the tenacity with which it pursued its cause, both in the Polish Parliament and beyond traditional political forums (including terrorist attacks against members of the government), caused Polish state officials to step up the programme of Polonisation through education.⁹⁵ The fact that Ukrainian speakers were more engaged than, for example, Belarusian speakers can be explained by the fact that the experiences at the end of and shortly after the First World War had raised national consciousness among Ukrainians, whereas Belarusian speakers lacked the stimulus to question power constellations and advocate their reshaping.⁹⁶ In contrast to Polish Upper Silesia, however, local inhabitants often resisted the idea of a school being

established in their villages. As the Polish ethnographer Józef Obrębski noted at the time, schools were mistrusted and perceived as new institutions that would prepare children for a career outside local communities.⁹⁷ Entire villages protested against the establishment of their local school, and mayors did not dare to make parents pay the fines issued by Polish school inspectors.⁹⁸

Since they were considered incorporable into the Polish nation-state, speakers of a Slavic language other than Polish, such as Ukrainian (but also Russian, Belarusian and Ruthenian), received less favourable conditions for learning their vernacular, or were even denied the right to learn it. However, while Polish authorities did indeed aim to reduce the number of pupils being taught in a Slavic language other than Polish, they were more permissive towards pupils enrolled in German-speaking or Jewish schools (the latter offering teaching in either Yiddish or Hebrew). In the unstable political and economic conditions at the time, Polish state representatives counted on the economic capital and experience of German speakers and Jews to support the post-war recovery.⁹⁹ The country witnessed an overall decrease in the number of German-speaking and Jewish public schools throughout the interwar period, but the representatives of these groups had the financial means to build and maintain private schools.¹⁰⁰ Whereas in 1924, 1,102 public primary schools in Poland had offered education in German, by 1925–1926 this number had already fallen to 699, and by 1937–1938 to 160. Meanwhile, however, 234 private schools flourished.¹⁰¹ The specificity of Jewish interwar education originated from the fact that Jews were considered a religious, not a national, minority, and were therefore not entitled to receive education in Yiddish or Hebrew in public primary schools. 60 per cent of Jewish children were already attending these public schools in the mid-1920s, and their number increased to 84 per cent within a decade.¹⁰²

In particular, Jewish children who had previously lived under the Russian regime recalled state education as an encounter with modernity enabling them to develop a loyalty with a world beyond that of the *cheder*, the traditional elementary school in which children were taught the basics of Judaism. One youngster, submitting an autobiographical composition for a writing contest organised by the Jewish Scientific Institute in 1939, lyrically described how ‘seeing the purity of the school class, I felt a revulsion towards the dirty, smoky cheder’.¹⁰³ A network of approximately 300 privately run primary schools was already flourishing in 1925, and would increase afterwards, although the exact number of schools offering teaching in Yiddish or Hebrew is difficult to determine because they operated under different umbrella organisations, each having their own method of counting.¹⁰⁴ The largest organisation of orthodox Jews, Chorem, espous-

ing a traditional religiously oriented approach to teaching, oversaw the schooling of 60 percent of the Jewish children receiving private education. And yet, despite its growth over the years, Chorew saw some of its schools closed after Polish school inspectors found the quality of education to be unsatisfactory.¹⁰⁵ Non-orthodox Jewish private schools, on the other hand, paved the way for a political radicalisation of young Jews, whether as Zionists within the Hebrew schools coordinated by the Tarbut, or as atheists within the Yiddish schools of the Central Jewish School Organisation (Di Tsentrale Yidishe Shul-Organizatsye – TSYSHO), to name only the two largest organisations within the rapidly growing and diversifying school landscape at the time.¹⁰⁶

Interestingly, policymakers in Poland did not overly concern themselves with how foreign language training was organised. It remained unregulated in Polish-speaking schools until the introduction of the primary school law of 1932, which outlined a curriculum without foreign language training.¹⁰⁷ The Minority Treaty offered the possibility of requiring Polish to be taught as a foreign language in minority schools, but Polish authorities did not make use of it until 1926.¹⁰⁸

Upon the establishment and implementation of compulsory education, besides the formulation of language learning rules, Polish state representatives were also occupied with finding a balance between the competencies of the state and those of the Catholic Church. A secular public school system was opted for, in which clergymen could teach children religion for two hours a week, and religious schools had to operate privately.¹⁰⁹ The power balance between the state and the church changed when a concordat signed between the Vatican and Poland in 1925 granted the church a role exceeding its constitutional rights, leading to a power struggle between state and church that would not ebb until the end of the interwar period.¹¹⁰

The new state's political concern over the question of which language pupils were to learn, and in which schools, outweighed questions of how children were to learn a language.¹¹¹ Teachers and school textbook writers could largely improvise teaching content until the implementation of the primary school law in 1932.¹¹² Meanwhile, a multitude of scientific studies on children and education saw the light. Scientists in Poland shared an interest in educating free citizens willing to take up responsibility for the new state, but their findings often overlapped, contrasted or displayed incongruities.¹¹³ The first current of interest aligned with cultural reform pedagogy and gathered scientists to work out methods for learning Polish based on the psychological development of children.¹¹⁴ The second current centralised the development of children. Books written by foreign child specialists were translated into Polish, while Polish scientists who

had received their education in Western Europe and moved to Poland upon its independence published overviews of pedagogical scientific findings abroad in Polish.¹¹⁵

Belgium

Upon the establishment of compulsory education in their countries, Polish and Belgian authorities pursued different aims. Whereas in Poland, efforts were concentrated on promoting a wider use of Polish as the primary language of instruction at the expense of other, mostly Slavic, languages, in Belgium, the prescribed ideal for elite pupils was to achieve bilingualism, not by means of bilingual teaching throughout the entire primary school curriculum, but through intensive foreign language training starting in the final years of primary school education. According to the Belgian programme of studies of 1897, school authorities could, but were not obliged to, introduce the learning of a second language from the fifth year.¹¹⁶ This recommendation was implemented differently in the north and south of the country, laying bare the fact that Belgian schools continued to privilege French in foreign language training. Most French-speaking children in Wallonia finished their primary school in French without receiving training in a foreign language, whereas in Flanders, all Dutch-speaking children received education in their mother tongue and were offered French as a foreign language.¹¹⁷

In addition, primary schools in Flanders were allowed to operate in French without the requirement to offer lessons in Dutch. These schools were not that numerous, but they nevertheless remained popular given the political and economic opportunities for citizens with a mastery of French.¹¹⁸ Every guardian living in Flanders could declare his child's mother tongue to be French and put his child in a French-speaking school. The fact that whoever dared to question a guardian's choice was legally obliged to pay a fine demonstrates how deep the wounds of the School Wars – fought verbally between the Liberal and Catholic parties in the late nineteenth century over the primacy of state versus Catholic schools – still were.¹¹⁹ Although the law was in the first instance meant to guarantee guardians' religious freedom, it also guaranteed their freedom to choose the language of their children's primary school instruction. During the First World War, an alderman from Brussels had been deported for defending the free school choice policy for French speakers in the face of opposition from the German occupiers, who privileged the use of Dutch given its proximity to German. Perhaps the unpleasant memory of this episode played an additional role in the consequent implementation of the law once the war was over, although this was a local phenomenon

probably unknown to many school principals in Flanders during the interwar period.¹²⁰

In a way, one could thus say that French speakers in Flanders enjoyed a similar position to the German and Jewish minorities in Poland. As was also the case in Poland, there were children facing the consequences of this particular order of social segregation. The number of primary schools where Dutch was the language of instruction in Wallonia, for example, could be counted on one hand. In 1929, a Flemish priest indicated that Flemish miners working in Wallonia were not aware they could demand Dutch as the primary language of education for their children.¹²¹ These miners were often illiterate and did not have any political representation. Flemish activists were more occupied with striving to turn Ghent University into the first Dutch-speaking university of the country (which would eventually happen in 1930) than in guaranteeing language rights for miners' children in Wallonia.¹²² As was the case with Belarusian speakers in Poland, Dutch speakers in Wallonia had not been made or had not become conscious of their language rights.

However, in contrast to interwar Poland, Belgium had installed a complicated system enabling changes to be made in the language of instruction in primary schools in multilingual areas. The dominant language in primary education was defined for each municipality by means of a language survey (*talentelling*) centrally organised once every ten years. A simple majority was sufficient to ensure that French, Dutch or German would be the leading language of instruction in local primary schools for the next ten years. Once 20 per cent of the local inhabitants had declared a mother tongue other than the dominant one, they were entitled to special facilities. These facilities were initiated in the Brussels agglomeration and municipalities along the language border established by the language survey.¹²³ If at least twenty children spoke a language different to the one offered in school, for example, a separate class had to be set up within the school. Individual school principals had the authority to make these changes on an ongoing basis, but school inspectors ultimately had the decisive say.¹²⁴ Moreover, if a switch of languages in primary schools did not satisfy the local inhabitants, they could apply to the Belgian minister responsible for education in order to be granted the approval to offer a language of instruction that differed from the mother tongue of the children and to start foreign language instruction in the third year of primary school instead of the fifth year.¹²⁵

It has been argued that this system of checks and balances accelerated Frenchification in the Brussels agglomeration, where Dutch-speaking guardians preferred education in French because they believed it would increase their children's professional possibilities.¹²⁶ On the other hand,

this regulation also caused German to be re-established as the main language of instruction in municipalities belonging to the historically German-speaking part of Belgium, such as Welkenraedt, Boholz/Bého and Arel/Arlon. However, Belgian authorities did not entirely accept a return to the principle of a free use of languages laid down in the Belgian Constitution. Not only did they fail to train any additional German language teachers, but the non-binding programme of studies issued by the ministry responsible for educational affairs in 1922 referred only to the importance of French and Dutch as the cornerstone of the rational and linguistic development of primary school pupils. The programme did not mention German; it merely stated that ‘a thorough knowledge of French is indispensable for the not too numerous German population living along the borders with Wallonia’.¹²⁷ In 1924, an additional non-binding programme of studies was issued for German-speaking schools in Wallonia, prescribing that foreign language learning in French should be started in the first year.¹²⁸

In Belgium, the question of which languages pupils were taught, and when, was also considered more important than how pupils were to learn these languages. While pedagogues from different countries praised the 1922 programme of studies for judiciously adapting its aims to the language learning capacities of the public, now that compulsory education had been introduced, the programme skilfully managed to allow school authorities to adhere to the pedagogical demands of the programme, a mixture of encyclopaedic learning and Herbartianism, without having to support these ambitions.¹²⁹ The guidelines were formulated in a deliberately vague way because the Belgian state did not foresee itself playing a large role in primary schooling. Whether or not pedocentrism, which continued to enjoy support in liberal circles, was practiced depended on the initiative of individual schools. As a result, Catholic schools could distance themselves from reform pedagogy altogether and not only endorse but also propagate a dogmatic form of Catholicism, Christocentrism, exalted above and outside of time.¹³⁰ Indeed, the long-standing power balance between the Catholic Church and the Belgian state, based on a mutual agreement worked out during the School Wars at the end of the nineteenth century in order to prevent further conflicts over education, remained unchallenged throughout the 1920s.

Making the Border

After state border lines were drawn, power structures and power strategies in Polish Upper Silesia and in Eupen-Malmedy were reconsidered and re-

arranged, all in an attempt to bestow the new spatial division with meaning.¹³¹ The making of the border through legislation in the two case study borderlands served to confirm and maintain the demarcation carved out by the border line.¹³² The solutions introduced to appease the tensions of multilingualism in Polish Upper Silesia and Eupen-Malmedy were strikingly similar. Two sorts of primary schools were set up in order to divide what previously had been a single space and separate children according to their supposed vernacular. Within that process, four elements were of crucial importance: the access to teaching in German, the conditions of (foreign) language training, the situation of teachers, and the role of religion. However, whereas the Silesian Parliament decided to ignore the language learning rules prescribed by the Polish state, instead adopting and adapting the educational laws from Prussian times until 1932, Baltia's plan for language learning in Eupen-Malmedy was from the very start deeply rooted in existing Belgian language regulations for primary education.

Polish Upper Silesia

As has been demonstrated, of all the minorities living in the Second Polish Republic, the German minority in Polish Upper Silesia was granted the most favourable conditions for organising primary school education in German. The Geneva Convention of 1922 stipulated, for example, that guardians in Polish Upper Silesia could choose to send their children to primary schools across the state border line in German Upper Silesia. It also guaranteed guardians in Polish Upper Silesia the freedom to enrol their children in a local German-speaking or Polish-speaking school.¹³³ Nevertheless, the Silesian Parliament, which held decision-making authority over language learning measures (and chose not to consider Polish legislation a source of inspiration) aimed to reduce the number of German-speaking schools.¹³⁴ The dispute settlement framework set up by the League of Nations entitled anyone who felt their rights to have been violated – whether they be borderland inhabitants, Polish statesmen, German representatives or international bodies – to have their case heard. In this way, discussions concerning access to primary education became an important means to make the border. A closer look at the local level illustrates how negotiations and decisions over language learning generated the border in social space.

Schools in Upper Silesia remained under German jurisdiction until the end of the 1921–1922 school year.¹³⁵ A rare insight into how pupils experienced their education between 1918 and 1922 is offered by the autobiographical compositions submitted for a writing contest organised by the Polish Sociological Institute (Instytut Socjologiczny) in 1934, in which

youngsters aged between seventeen and twenty-one reflected upon their early days in school. A majority of the thirty-two writers did not like having to attend school, mostly because the classes had as many as sixty pupils, or because learning how to read and write in German was difficult for them. One author, for example, revealed: 'Learning was very hard for me because I did not know any letters in German, because everything my father had taught me was in Polish.'¹³⁶ Another wrote: 'I started school in 1920/21. I only know that I went to a German school all year. I learned poorly how to learn, and especially read. When it came time for us to read, I hid behind my friends' backs just to avoid my turn, which I often managed to do.'¹³⁷ The Silesian Uprisings are presented in these autobiographical compositions as an almost visible rupture in the lives of the children. In the words of one author, who had been a seven-year-old boy at the time: 'And so I went for three months to the German school. Later, the Silesian Uprising broke out.'¹³⁸ What followed was vividly remembered by a young writer of about the same age:

But then came the upheaval and all the German teachers had to scarper. There was no school for almost a year, and when it started again, I was enrolled straight into the second grade. Here I quickly began to understand Polish orthography and learned to read in the blink of an eye. I was admired by the teachers. The word 'freedom' was understood differently back then, especially by schoolchildren. We thought that 'freedom' meant we could do anything we liked. So, we went to school when we wanted to, and we also left when we wanted to.¹³⁹

Jan Szczepański, the sociologist who interpreted these compositions in the mid-1930s, concluded that the tumult of these years had deeply undermined the authority of teachers in Upper Silesia, and that children had developed a system of shared values among themselves that was foreign to the institution of the school.¹⁴⁰

In the first half of 1922, about 30 per cent of the parents in the Lubliniec district signed their children up for education in German.¹⁴¹ Among them was the father of Paweł and Małgorzata Helisch, who wanted his children to attend the public German-speaking primary school in the village of Koszęcin. Several reasons may have supported his decision. German had been the standard language in primary education for decades and knowing the language could help his children's career prospects. At the time, it was also unknown whether, and for how long, the new independent Polish state would last. When the German-speaking school in Koszęcin opened in June 1924, welcoming twenty-nine pupils from the village, Paweł and Małgorzata were not among them. An official from the Silesian authorities had convinced their father to give up on the idea.¹⁴² The fa-

ther now claimed that, as a Polish citizen, he wanted his children to learn both Polish and German. The official had explained to him that a foreign language would be taught in the village's newly created Polish-speaking school but not in the German-speaking school located one street farther away.¹⁴³ Even though this was not true, as will be explained later in this chapter, the official had secured the children for the Polish-speaking school. After the official had written his name as Jan Helisch in the resignation list (containing the names of parents who wished to withdraw their application to the German-speaking school), the father chose to sign his name underneath as Johann Helisch. Was it a sudden appreciation of the benefits of bilingualism that caused the father to change his mind? Respect for the advice of an educated man? Or a feeling of intimidation in the presence of such an ardent Polish nationalist? Did he sign with his German name by force of habit or could we perhaps read it as a subversive political practice? We will never know. We do know, however, that, irrespective of the linguistic plans nationalists had in mind, Johann Helisch had his own motives for sending his children to a primary school in a specific language. Although about 30 per cent of the parents in the Lubliniec district, just like Helisch, applied to have their children attend a German-speaking school in 1922, Silesian authorities declared two-thirds of these applications invalid.¹⁴⁴

A group of borderland parents whose children had been denied access sent a complaint to the Mixed Commission in Katowice supervising the implementation of the Geneva Convention. The Mixed Commission rapped the Silesian authorities over the knuckles for contravening the will of guardians who wished to identify their children as members of the German minority, and for completing school applications themselves in the absence of such guardians.¹⁴⁵ The Mixed Commission's intervention postponed the closure of most of the German-speaking primary schools in the Lubliniec district, but could not prevent it.¹⁴⁶ In one of the most prominent cases, the public German-speaking primary school in the city of Lubliniec was closed in 1922 and replaced by a Polish-German bilingual school. Despite being obliged to do so, Silesian authorities did not hurry to provide teaching in German.¹⁴⁷ They were awaiting decisions on the international scene which they believed could bring about changes to the supranational set-up they felt constrained them. Germany faced an economic depression and experienced three internal coups in the autumn of 1923. In particular, the installation of a Rhenish Republic by a separatist government enjoying the support of France sparked the hope that separatists in the German part of Upper Silesia would follow suit, thus calling the Geneva Convention into question.¹⁴⁸ When that prospect vanished in 1924, public German minority schools were opened. Their number gradually decreased in the

years to follow. In the Lubliniec district, only the German primary school in Koszęcin remained open until the outbreak of the Second World War.

Along with access to education in German, language regulation was used as a strategy to make the border. Looking at the regulation for Polish Upper Silesia, it is hard to believe that a battle over the language of education escalated here in the second half of the 1920s. In contrast to Poland, where foreign language learning was unregulated at the time, the Silesian Parliament used its decision-making power over language learning measures in order to copy the former Prussian school law that offered both mother tongue and foreign language training, and to prescribe the same amount of mother tongue and foreign language training in the Polish-speaking and German-speaking teaching branches. Children in Polish Upper Silesia received more hours of both mother tongue instruction and foreign language training than children in the rest of Poland did. In both branches, mother tongue training amounted to ten hours a week, and foreign language training to three hours a week from the fourth year onwards.¹⁴⁹ Over the years, the amount of Polish in both curricula decreased in order to provide more room for other subjects, such as history, but the hours of language training remained higher than elsewhere in Poland and constituted a clear marker of the region's distinct past and current status.¹⁵⁰

However, the battle over primary education did not centre around the question of how many hours should be spent teaching in the mother tongue and how many on foreign language training. Instead, the conflict was the result of the determination of Polish and German nationalists to offer a monolingual primary school pathway, and the fact that this goal went against the wishes of many local inhabitants. For instance, the school principal of the public primary school in Lubliniec, which offered Polish- and German-speaking branches, D. Zych, started his school chronicle as follows: 'After centuries of servitude in Silesian schools, the mother tongue of the Silesian people can now be heard: the Polish language, which no Teutonic Order was able to tear out.'¹⁵¹ In one sentence, the author nationalised the tongue of the local population and made it the victor over the Teutonic Order, a *pars pro toto* for German expansionism. His words illustrate how Polish nationalists intertwined language with nationalism and history in their discourses.¹⁵² Paul Poralla, the spokesperson of the institution coordinating German minority schooling in Polish Upper Silesia (*Deutscher Schulverein*), on the other hand, spoke of 'skilful manoeuvring' in meeting the language demands for Polish so as not to 'damage the special mission to educate German people'.¹⁵³ But Zych and Poralla often worked with parents who, just like Johann Helisch in Koszęcin, were weighing up multiple loyalties when choosing a school for their children.

In the same resignation list Helisch signed in the early 1920s, we find husbands and wives who disagreed about which primary school to send their children (even accusing the other of having applied while drunk), parents who wanted to offer their children a bilingual education, parents who declared that they had made up their minds, and a guardian with Polish citizenship who considered education in German inadequate for an orphan with German citizenship.¹⁵⁴

A third way of spatialising power was to steer who was to teach borderland children their language and how. The Minority Treaty enabled teachers holding German certificates to remain employed in Poland. Whereas teachers in Greater Poland and Western Prussia were required to pass a Polish language exam, the Geneva Convention of 1922 allowed teachers in Polish Upper Silesia to continue in their profession without having their competencies checked.¹⁵⁵ And yet, the measure did not prevent many teachers from moving to Germany. In 1922, the school year in the formerly German part of Polish Upper Silesia began with 1,200 teachers, compared to 3,500 the year before.¹⁵⁶ Among them were Konrad Świerczek and Franz Chmiel. Both had taught German when their home grounds lay in the German Empire. Konrad Świerczek was involved in the plebiscite supporting the Polish cause, and after the switch to Polish state sovereignty oversaw the teaching of the Polish language as the first school inspector of the Lubliniec district. As he did not know Polish sufficiently, he took a state exam in Polish language and history in 1925.¹⁵⁷ Franz Chmiel, on the other hand, found work within the German-speaking teaching branch. He became a clerk responsible for school issues in the Volksbund, the organisation representing the German minority, and in 1923 advanced to the position of school principal of the German-speaking school in Koszęcin.¹⁵⁸ The decisions these teachers made were not primarily based on their language competencies. They needed to adhere to the demands laid down in the Geneva Convention and operate within school branches offering education in different languages. German and Polish nationalists provided them with additional incentives to pursue their respective causes.

Within the Weimar Republic, there was wide support for the belief that Germans living abroad needed to be empowered in order to be immune to Polish assimilation pressures. Revising the Treaty of Versailles remained a constant aim in German foreign policy, shared by all political parties and most societal groups.¹⁵⁹ Until that aim could be realised, the German minority was to stay in place and to preserve and protect German culture through speaking, teaching and learning German.¹⁶⁰ German authorities therefore secretly sponsored teachers such as Franz Chmiel so that they could earn even more than teachers working in Germany. In favouring Polish Upper Silesia over Greater Poland and Pomerania in the distribu-

tion of teaching bonuses, political representatives of the Weimar Republic indicated the importance they attached to Upper Silesia.¹⁶¹ When Polish authorities discovered this secret sponsoring in 1928, forty-two teachers from Polish Upper Silesia were dismissed.¹⁶² And yet, Polish authorities also gave a bonus to teachers in Polish Upper Silesia.

As local teachers made up only a third of the teaching personnel, teachers from elsewhere in Poland willing to move to Polish Upper Silesia were in great demand and could count on a financial incentive to relocate.¹⁶³ Even during the nineteenth century, Polish nationalists had considered terrains beyond the western borders of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, such as Silesia, as Polish.¹⁶⁴ One such Polish nationalist was the school principal of the Lubliniec primary school, D. Zych, who had taught Polish in pre-war Galicia and had moved to Polish Upper Silesia with the aim of Polonising local inhabitants. He systematically encouraged children to leave the German-speaking branch and switch to the Polish-speaking one in his school. The teachers within his school, however, did not necessarily endorse the principal's nationalist cause. The school chronicle reveals that all teachers, whether local or immigrated, whether active in the Polish-speaking branch or the German-speaking one, undertook joint initiatives to support a cause they considered more important: to ease the lives of poor pupils.¹⁶⁵ Raising money for shoes and providing food bridged the various backgrounds and national motivations of the teaching personnel.¹⁶⁶

At the same time, local talent was to be trained. In Polish Upper Silesia, special teaching seminaries were set up for those wanting to teach in Polish-speaking branches because local inhabitants were considered insufficiently prepared to start teaching in Polish.¹⁶⁷ Locals wanting to teach in a German-speaking branch, however, needed to attend one of the Polish state teaching seminaries outside Polish Upper Silesia. These seminaries lacked access to the latest pedagogical developments because Polish prospective teachers were being prepared to teach in German and replace these minority teachers.¹⁶⁸ By the end of the interwar period, not a single institution of higher learning in Poland was still offering training for German-speaking teachers.¹⁶⁹

Having enough teachers to provide language instruction was a constant preoccupation within Polish Upper Silesia. Polish and German policymakers concentrated on peopling the borderlands with teachers loyal to their new regimes, whose teaching would guarantee the upbringing of loyal future citizens.¹⁷⁰ With the hindsight of time, it can be said that Polish authorities achieved their goal. In the 1940s, teachers were among the most loyal Polish citizens in Polish Upper Silesia. A Polish questionnaire composed shortly after the Second World War revealed that 152 of the 225

interwar teachers of the Lubliniec district wanted to be employed again in local schools.¹⁷¹

The fourth and final element playing a role in the making of the border through language learning was religion. The predominantly Catholic inhabitants of Polish Upper Silesia appreciated the greater religious freedom pupils enjoyed in school after the lands had switched state sovereignty. Because the Silesian Parliament did not demand a clear separation of church and state in education, as was the case elsewhere in Poland, Catholic schools were able to dominate the Polish Upper Silesian interwar school landscape.¹⁷² Pupils in Polish Upper Silesia saw their religious courses supervised by the newly founded Katowice diocese, instead of by the Polish state, and received twice as many religious classes as pupils elsewhere in Poland (four hours).¹⁷³

Clergymen did not shy away from asking for more. In the summer of 1924, for example, clergymen argued to Silesian authorities that an increase in religious teaching from four to five hours a week would help children to learn Polish: 'the lack of language skills among Upper Silesian children makes the study's instruction significantly difficult for the teacher and forces him to proceed more slowly, and this is especially true, the more difficult the topic is'.¹⁷⁴ They used the same argument as their fore-runners. In 1890, the Roman Catholic Bishop Kopp in Upper Silesia had asked the Prussian Minister of Education to introduce an additional hour of religious instruction, claiming that there was an insufficient knowledge of the German language among local children, while at the same time pursuing his own agenda of increasing the amount of religious teaching.¹⁷⁵ Since the *Kulturkampf*, people in Upper Silesia had bridged the language divides that German and Polish nationalists wanted to install by means of practices such as bilingual masses, thereby establishing a distinct social space that remained visible in practices long after the border lines were redrawn.¹⁷⁶

According to the Polish Constitution and the Geneva Convention, it was not only Roman Catholics but the members of every confessional minority who possessed the right to practise their religion in their mother tongue. If at least twelve pupils of a certain denomination also belonged to a linguistic national minority, a school had to organise minority religious courses.¹⁷⁷ With only 0.9 per cent of its inhabitants Protestant, the Lubliniec district was the least multiconfessional of all Polish Upper Silesia's districts, where on average 6 per cent were Protestant.¹⁷⁸ Nevertheless, it is somewhat surprising to find in the school chronicle of the bilingual school in Lubliniec that eleven children attending the school in 1923–1924 were Protestant, seven of them following the Polish-speaking curriculum, four the German-speaking one.¹⁷⁹ Was this number pure coincidence or the re-

sult of skilful manipulation? These children received their religious education together and were taught by one teacher.¹⁸⁰ Meanwhile, the Roman Catholic children received their religious teaching separately, either in the Polish-speaking branch or the German-speaking one. Apart from Protestant children, no traces of pupils holding other beliefs were found in the archival documents of the public primary school in Lubliniec.

Despite the Geneva Convention being equally applicable to German Upper Silesia, education in Polish existed merely as a formality on the other side of the state border line. Georges Kaeckenbeeck, President of the Arbitral Tribunal of Upper Silesia in the interwar years, cited the composition of the Convention as the main reason for this discrepancy. Fearing that borderland parents would suffer reprisals from German authorities, the Polish delegation negotiating the Convention's conditions had proposed that census data on children's mother tongues be used as the basis for a policy on minority schools. They correctly foresaw that most of the educated inhabitants who felt an affinity with Polishness, since they had been active on the Polish side in the Uprisings, would soon resettle to Polish Upper Silesia, while inhabitants who felt an affinity with Germanness (*Deutschtum*) in Polish Upper Silesia, whose ranks included great landowners, would prefer to keep their lands.¹⁸¹ The Geneva Convention nevertheless eventually required guardians to apply for minority education, which turned out to be more favourable for the German party. There was indeed an abundance of local inhabitants willing to play a leading role in the Volksbund, which determinedly strove for the continuation of education in German in Polish Upper Silesia. By contrast, a similarly zealous movement capable of building a Polish school system from scratch in German Upper Silesia was lacking.¹⁸² 'It was therefore', according to Kaeckenbeeck, 'the inequality wrought by the different working of the principles of the convention under different conditions which was at the root of the whole difficulty . . . the German authorities had little else to do than let the principles of the convention work in their favour.'¹⁸³

The prestige of German culture, and the prospect it held of a more prosperous professional career, was something Polish culture could not compete with, either in German or Polish Upper Silesia.¹⁸⁴ According to Marek Korowicz, a Polish nationalist and state official in Polish Upper Silesia, there were 83,000 Polish-speaking children in German Upper Silesia in 1925, of whom only 1,288 attended a Polish minority school; by the mid-1930s, their number had decreased to 961. Whereas in Polish Upper Silesia, German minority schools attracted twice as many pupils as would have been expected from the census data gathered in 1925, in German Upper Silesia, only one out of seventy Polish-speaking borderland pupils received their education in Polish. By the 1930s, the number of border-

land pupils attending German-speaking schools in Polish Upper Silesia had come to correspond to census data, whereas the discrepancy had accelerated to one out of four hundred on the other side of the border.¹⁸⁵ And yet Georges Kaeckenbeeck concluded that in the ardent struggle over minority schools in the second half of the 1920s and the early 1930s, 'the greatest change' was endured by the German minority in Polish Upper Silesia. That struggle, he argued, 'was one between cultures – and ultimately between states – but the victims were all men, women and children, who forfeited a quiet and normal life by becoming the instruments of contending forces'.¹⁸⁶

Eupen-Malmedy

As was the case in Polish Upper Silesia, the school environment of pupils in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy had already changed before these borderlands switched sovereignty, with the authority of teachers being deeply affected in the process. In the autumn of 1919, new teachers recruited in Wallonia and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg started work in the primary schools of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, where they initially taught alongside German teachers. Hermann Heutz, recalling his time as a schoolboy in the village of Hauset, wrote:

Downstairs in the senior class, the Headmaster K. opened the door and windows and sang with his schoolboys 'The Watch on the Rhine' with all his might.¹⁸⁷ The junior teacher Th. called on the 'little ones', the group to which I belonged, to open our reading books so as to reveal the image of the German imperial couple. He then asked us to scratch out the eyes of the deposed couple with the nibs of our pens. We children took to this task with enthusiasm, in ignorance of the situation and filled with the joy of destruction.¹⁸⁸

Moreover, when his new Belgian teacher gave him an exercise book with a lion eating an eagle on its cover, Hermann's father tore the cover off, upon which his teacher refused to further correct the boy's homework in that book.¹⁸⁹

Once Herman Baltia had assumed power over the newly created entity Eupen-Malmedy, he used language learning in primary schools as a crucial means of making the border. This process was characterised by the same four elements as in the case of Polish Upper Silesia: the access to teaching in German, the conditions of (foreign) language training, the situation of teachers and the role of religion. First, he copied Belgium's primary school law (issued in 1914 and implemented in 1918) almost in its entirety into local legislation, enshrining in law the principle that borderland pupils were to be taught in their mother tongue.¹⁹⁰ In order to

determine the mother tongue of borderland inhabitants, he issued a language survey, which revealed that there were 45,000 German speakers, 4,000 French speakers and 8,500 bilinguals.¹⁹¹

As a consequence, he divided Eupen-Malmedy into two language zones in accordance with the results of the survey, creating a smaller French-speaking zone centred around the city of Malmedy and a larger German-speaking zone centred around the cities of Eupen and Sankt Vith. The inhabitants who had declared themselves bilingual were included in the French-speaking region.¹⁹² The fact that Baltia established schools according to the results of the survey clearly shows that it was not his initial intention to reduce the number of German-speaking schools. In fact, he also pumped money into the renovation of classrooms abandoned during the latter days of the First World War.¹⁹³ Joining the Belgian Kingdom under these conditions made even the former colonel's opponents appreciate his language policy. The exception was the Royal Flemish Academy, who argued that the vernacular spoken in Eupen was not German, but Dutch, and that primary education should therefore be offered in Dutch instead of in German – an argument Baltia rejected.¹⁹⁴

Baltia was more cautious in offering local inhabitants other freedoms: 'Across all classes, from patricians to workers, these people learn a great deal of discipline from the army or the school. They misuse freedom if it is offered to them too quickly', Baltia reported to the Belgian prime minister.¹⁹⁵ He introduced a latent form of censorship, which caused the press to cease criticising both the borderlands' switch to Belgian sovereignty and his policies.¹⁹⁶ In addition, upon discovering with horror that a considerable number of children were crossing the border to receive their education in Germany, he introduced special measures for Eupen-Malmedy: he declared German primary school certificates invalid, threatened to sanction parents unable to justify their children's school absences, and forbade the use of books from Germany within Eupen-Malmedy.¹⁹⁷

Establishing Eupen-Malmedy as a colonial entity in order to prepare the formerly German lands for full integration within a country boasting one of the most liberal constitutions in the world, the Baltia regime made overt the marriage of liberal and colonial ways of thinking that prevailed within the Belgian Kingdom. While being forbidden to cross the state border for their education, borderland pupils were nevertheless guaranteed primary education in either German or French. Furthermore, in contrast to borderland pupils in Polish Upper Silesia, they had no cause to fear that education in German would disappear any time soon.

At first glance, language learning in Eupen-Malmedy bore a number of similarities to language learning elsewhere in Belgium. First, as was the case for Dutch-speaking children in Flanders, pupils in the German

language zone enjoyed education in their mother tongue and received foreign language training in French. Second, as was the case for Dutch-speaking children in Wallonia, German-speaking and bilingual children in the French language zone were to attend school in French. Third, as was the case for French-speaking children in Flanders, a school was set up in Eupen to provide education for the children of Belgian civil servants moving to the region. Nevertheless, although access to language learning in primary schools in Eupen-Malmedy mirrored rules practiced elsewhere in Belgium, they were not entirely the same. Unlike elsewhere in Belgium, borderland pupils in the German-speaking zone were not allowed to enrol in the French-speaking school of Eupen.¹⁹⁸ In fact, Herman Baltia did not give any borderland parents the freedom to choose a primary school in their preferred language. Nor did he provide opportunities for them to air their grievances, in contrast to Polish Upper Silesia, where local inhabitants could contact the Mixed Commission. And yet, Baltia's measures to prevent conflict over primary education by means of the installation of language zones went further than in Polish Upper Silesia because Belgian legislation provided him with a suitable framework to start from.

Language learning regulation was the second element in making the border. In contrast to Polish Upper Silesia, in Eupen-Malmedy, a specific focus was put on foreign language training. Herman Baltia went further than the usual introduction of foreign language training in the fifth year (as happened in Flanders and Wallonia), the third year (as happened in the Brussels agglomeration and multilingual municipalities along the language border), or even the first year (in accordance with the 1924 non-binding programme of studies for German-speaking schools in Wallonia). Besides impeding borderland pupils from attending primary schools in Germany and denying guardians the freedom to choose their schools, the third specificity in his educational legislation was his decision to make foreign language learning from the first year of primary schooling mandatory instead of allowing that prescription to remain non-binding.¹⁹⁹ The fourth special measure stipulated that pupils in the German language zone were to be taught mathematics in their seventh (and final) year of primary school in German, but suggested they should repeat the content in French.²⁰⁰

These rules enshrined in law Baltia's aim to accelerate the integration of German-speaking pupils within the Belgian state. Although Baltia decried the French policy of generalising the use of French in Alsace-Lorraine immediately after the switch to French state sovereignty, there should be no misunderstanding about the similar future French and Belgian policymakers had in mind for their borderlands.²⁰¹ They were to become integral parts of the French and Belgian state inhabited by people who

spoke French fluently. Whereas French authorities adopted a more hard-line approach, Baltia opted for a softer, more gradual integration of the German-speaking zone.²⁰²

In the French-speaking zone of Eupen-Malmedy, he stepped up the pace of his reforms. Pupils starting school in the French-speaking zone were taught in French immediately and were given didactic materials for free in order to support their learning process.²⁰³ An exultant Baltia crowed: 'We gave out free books of prayers and French songs so as to replace those fat German missals that had flooded the Walloon country!'²⁰⁴ While Baltia considered the transition to learning in French a relatively straightforward matter, the history of language use in the region was a little more complicated. In the early twentieth century, German authorities had reported that the people who lived and studied in the city of Malmedy saw their Walloon tongue as a means to resist Germanification,²⁰⁵ while loyalty towards the German Empire among farmers in the villages in the vicinity of Malmedy was reported as being satisfactory.²⁰⁶ By the time the villages found themselves under Baltia's transition regime, peasant children either spoke German or were bilingual. The situation of borderland pupils in the French-speaking zone bore similarities to that of the children of Flemish miners in Wallonia, who were also taught in French. In contrast to the latter, however, these borderland peasant pupils received an hour of German instruction a week. Baltia also introduced this special measure in the French language zone where, according to his logic, the German language classes could have impeded integration. Thus, despite his authoritarianism, Baltia acted with a consistency that was lacking in Belgian language regulations.

The third element in the making of the border through language learning was steering the selection process that would determine who was to teach borderland pupils their languages. The question of what to do with the existing teaching staff was answered differently in the two case study borderlands. The bilateral Belgian-German Convention of Aix-la-Chapelle (Aachen), which was concluded in 1920, foresaw the possibility for teachers in Eupen-Malmedy to become Belgian civil servants. However, upon being required by Belgian authorities to swear an oath of loyalty to the state, almost the entire teaching force left for Germany.²⁰⁷ As a consequence, the need to attract teachers from elsewhere was higher than in Polish Upper Silesia. Indeed, initially, almost all teachers in Eupen-Malmedy had either migrated to the region or commuted from neighbouring provinces in Wallonia.²⁰⁸ In order to lure teachers to the borderlands, Baltia adopted the same approach as was used in Polish Upper Silesia, offering bonuses to those willing to relocate. However, the envy this provoked in teachers already employed in Eupen-Malmedy, as well as those working elsewhere

in Belgium, caused him to abolish the measure within months.²⁰⁹ Because it was so difficult to find German-speaking teachers, Herman Baltia decreed that certificates of higher education acquired in Germany should be automatically recognised, and organised a final exam for local teachers who had started their education under the former regime.²¹⁰ Baltia was acting pragmatically here: in suspending the freedom municipalities enjoyed under Belgian law to appoint and dismiss teachers, he retained control over the profile of the teaching staff.²¹¹ It is impossible to know whether the money Germany secretly transferred to Eupen-Malmedy in 1921 in support of cultural activities was used to pay out bonuses to these primary school teachers in order to shore up their loyalty to the fatherland. In any case, Baltia's control measures soon caused this funding to dry up.²¹²

In order to train new borderland teachers, Baltia did not open a teacher seminary in the Eupen-Malmedy region but let local inhabitants enrol on a German-language teacher training course at an established Belgian institute of higher learning in Arel/Arlon. He also effectuated the opening of an additional German section in a similar institute in Verviers.²¹³ German pedagogues criticised the substandard pedagogical level of the training being provided in Belgium and lamented that it would cause the German nation to lose its borderland children: '[the children] become adults, marry and pass on the attitude of the teacher in their professional environment, their family, their children. Yes, those who have the youth have the future! Woe to us when our future is in the hands of these pedagogues!'²¹⁴ German pedagogues saw in their science a tool to introduce teaching techniques that could shape and control human behaviour. They expressed their concern about the Belgian institute of higher learning because they believed that the education of a different kind of teacher could have a decisive influence on future power relations. Policymakers in Belgium, however, had a less extensive history with compulsory education and reform pedagogy. How the children in Eupen-Malmedy were to learn their languages was of little concern to them. Above all, policymakers aimed to people the borderlands with teachers loyal to the new regime.²¹⁵ As was the case in Polish Upper Silesia, their policy seems to have worked. In 1940, teachers were among the most loyal nationals in Belgium's newest borderlands, with two-thirds of them fleeing from the German invasion to the centre of Belgium.²¹⁶

The final element playing a role in the making of the border through language learning was religion. Following the switch to Belgian state sovereignty, all primary schools in Eupen-Malmedy transformed from secular public schools under state control to state-funded Catholic private schools operated by local municipalities.²¹⁷ Municipalities could have opted to run

public secular schools but were unanimous in favouring Catholic schools. Local clergymen praised 'the extensive rights of self-determination' Belgian school legislation offered to the Catholic Church, as well as the pedagogy it espoused.²¹⁸ Traditional authority, as pointed out by Max Weber almost a century ago, based its legitimacy on religiousness and people's respect for their ancestors. The new system of power being carved out in the region reduced the rational-legal authority of modernisation, bureaucratisation and legalisation, to the benefit of traditional authority.²¹⁹

Granting the Catholic Church these rights had consequences for the opportunities of borderland inhabitants of other faiths. Eupen-Malmedy was not inhabited by Jews, but there were 282 Protestants living there.²²⁰ The Belgian state subsidised the teaching of Protestant courses if at least fifteen pupils signed up, but the Belgian Federation of Protestant Churches was only entitled to provide that teaching in secular schools.²²¹ The Protestant school in Eupen was closed in 1922 because of a lack of pupils.²²² When guardians responsible for sixteen pupils applied to the city council to reopen it in 1931, their request was denied because a suitable room could not be found.²²³ Because the region only offered Catholic schools, the right of the children to receive Protestant teaching could not be realised. Space had turned into an essential factor in the battle over control.²²⁴ There was no supranational equivalent to the Geneva Convention to rectify this situation. In the 1930s, an appeal was made to donors in Germany for financial support, which would indicate that a private Protestant teaching initiative existed. However, a lack of other sources suggests this initiative was not continued.²²⁵

Conclusion

Two new administrative entities came into being after the First World War: Polish Upper Silesia and Eupen-Malmedy. Through a processual understanding of borders, as well as a relational approach towards the human-made creation and functioning of borders, this chapter looked beyond the drawing of the state border line in order to demonstrate how language learning in the borderlands functioned as a crucial means of making the border.

The framework of comparison detailed in chapter two demonstrated how the processual making of the border manifested itself differently in Polish Upper Silesia and in Eupen-Malmedy. With reference to the first axis of comparison, it can be said that phantom borders only played a role in Eupen-Malmedy in the sense that the earlier establishment of compulsory education made the fight against illiteracy easier than in other places

within the Belgian Kingdom. In Polish Upper Silesia, however, their impact was more profound. This is exemplified by the decision of the Silesian Parliament to copy and adapt the old Prussian school curriculum, instead of implementing the Polish school curriculum, and the fact that local clergymen continued their habit (developed during the *Kulturkampf*) of making the monolingual demands of Polish or German nationalists subordinate to religious loyalty.

With regards to the second axis of comparison, it became clear how decisive power structures and strategies were for the constitution and articulation of multiple loyalties. The document father Helisch signed when taking his children out of a German-speaking primary school in Polish Upper Silesia reveals the whole gamut of pragmatic decisions taken by borderland parents after weighing up the potential impact on their lives. If the rights granted these parents by the Geneva Convention were violated, they could voice their complaints within the dispute settlement framework that had been set up under supranational control. Colonel Herman Baltia, by contrast, steered borderland guardians' choice of primary schools instead of giving them the right to a free choice, as was common elsewhere in Belgium. Owing to the installation of latent censorship, and given the absence of a supranational framework of control, this rule was not thematised further. It is all the more surprising, then, that the local solutions Baltia offered to appease the tensions of multilingualism in borderland primary schools, such as establishing a German-speaking language zone and accepting the fact that local children had German as a mother tongue, went further than the ones offered in Polish Upper Silesia. This was because he could borrow extensively from the national legislation of a country that respected the equal use of languages, at least in its constitution.

Through the third axis of comparison, it can be seen how local practices were shaped by the multidimensional spatial and temporal contexts in which they were articulated. Already within the first years of its existence, historical actors in Polish Upper Silesia made great use of the dispute settlement framework that had been set up under supranational control. This was because the respective interests of Polish nationalists, German nationalists and borderland inhabitants were, and would remain, fundamentally different. Eupen-Malmedy, meanwhile, was an administrative entity that, to a certain extent, embodied in microcosm what the Belgian Kingdom stood for. Its inhabitants experienced a combination of dictatorial rule and a limited form of the liberalism practiced elsewhere in the Belgian Kingdom (enjoying the freedom of religion, for instance). In contrast to Polish Upper Silesia, there was no supranational control over the way in which these borderland inhabitants were treated.

Despite the different systems of power in Polish Upper Silesia and in Eupen-Malmedy, a set of six common characteristics of borderland schooling could be distilled from the analysis. First, given that the drawing of the state border line was more a result of geopolitical decisions than an articulation of the wishes of local inhabitants, many borderland pupils had parents who had not chosen to live under a Polish or Belgian regime. Second, since policymakers clearly defined their ideas for the future in the language learning regulations they introduced, these pupils were participants in a political experiment. The solely German-speaking school system from before was replaced by two types of schools that, on the basis of an abundance of newly introduced rules governing language learning, separated borderland pupils according to their mother tongue.

Third, the language learning process in borderland schools was much more regulated than was the case for children growing up elsewhere in Poland and Belgium. The systems of power applicable to Polish Upper Silesia and Eupen-Malmedy had control and preventive measures built in so as to avoid conflicts over language learning. In the case of Polish Upper Silesia, the Geneva Convention, which set in stone the language rights of borderland pupils, as well as the rights of guardians to decide upon the mother tongue of their offspring created a juridical body that allowed borderland inhabitants, Polish statesmen, German representatives and international bodies to air their grievances about this system of power, with such dispute settlements being documented in great detail. However, in the case of Eupen-Malmedy, the school and language a child was to be educated in was not the result of an active choice on the part of a guardian, but depended on the language zone he or she lived in. Furthermore, no framework existed in which disgruntled parties could air and settle their grievances, a lacuna that leaves us today with barely any sources.

Fourth, the additional regulations for borderland schools could not prevent them from experiencing the inconsistencies and contradictions of the system of power surrounding them to a much greater extent than schools elsewhere in Poland and Belgium. Aligning an objectivist understanding of minority belonging with the aim of bringing up exclusively monolingual children, Silesian authorities centralised the matter of access to primary education in German in Polish Upper Silesia and strictly regulated foreign language training. Many local inhabitants, however, were in search of bilingual training for their children. In Eupen-Malmedy, Baltia introduced special measures for borderland pupils in order to speed up the process of their French language learning but did not allow German-speaking guardians to place their children in the newly founded French-speaking school of Eupen.

Fifth, the fact that supranational law protected local teachers in Polish Upper Silesia and not in Eupen-Malmedy did not prevent primary schools in both regions from being understaffed. In both case study borderlands, schools were staffed with immigrated teachers loyal to the new regime as well as by local teachers who were deprived of access to new German pedagogical findings. At the time, the concern that teachers in the border regions lacked the knowledge to guide and shape the behaviour of their pupils was expressed solely by German pedagogues.

Finally, most borderland pupils enjoyed more freedom to practice their religion than before. Returning traditional authority to Catholic clergymen was considered normal in Belgium, as religious rights were codified in the Belgian Constitution, while the relationship between the Catholic Church and the state had stabilised after the School Wars at the end of the nineteenth century. In Polish Upper Silesia, however, nationalists and clergymen continued to question that relationship, while religion, as it had done since the *Kulturkampf*, continued to present itself as an alternative source of loyalty to nationalism.

Notes

1. See SE, III/191, 127 (Enseignement. Situation au 10 janvier 1920). On social space, see Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 68–69.
2. Kamusella, 'Isomorphism', 57.
3. Borodziej, *Geschichte Polens*, 131.
4. Pabst, 'Eupen-Malmedy', 289ff.
5. Lukes, *Power*, 25.
6. Ibid., 19.
7. Zloch, *Polnischer Nationalismus*, vol. 78, 168; Raitz von Frentz, *A Lesson Forgotten*, 263–67.
8. Macmillan, *Paris 1919*, 207.
9. Loeber, 'Die Minderheitenschutzverträge', 189.
10. Raitz von Frentz, *A Lesson Forgotten*, 265.
11. Ibid., 265.
12. Kamusella, *Isomorphism*, 79.
13. Ibid., 57.
14. Roman Dmowski quoted in Borodziej, *Geschichte Polens*, 171.
15. Ibid., 111.
16. Eser, 'Volk, Staat, Gott!', 22; Novikov, *Shades*, 204.
17. Macmillan, *Paris 1919*, 97.
18. Fink, *Defending*, 135–40 and 235.
19. Borodziej, *Geschichte Polens*, 121.
20. Bjork et al., 'Introduction', 1.
21. Wambaugh, *Plebiscites*, vol. 1, 211; Dziewulski, *Wyniki plebiscytu*.

22. Rodriguez, 'Scoundrels', 100.
23. Prażmowska, *Poland*, 93–94.
24. Bjork, *Neither German*, 256; Böhler, *Wojna domowa*, 154–63.
25. Wilson, *Frontiers*, 213; Böhler, *Wojna domowa*, 260.
26. Jerczyński, *Historia*, 352. See also Dziewulski, *Wyniki plebiscytu*.
27. Prażmowska, *Poland*, 93–94.
28. Bieniek, 'Służba zdrowia', 9–10.
29. This figure for the year 1922 was mentioned by Błaszczak-Waławik, 'Miejsce', 13. See also Schattkowsky, 'Minderheitenfrage', 117–47.
30. Fink, *Defending*, 260–64; Raitz von Frentz, *A Lesson Forgotten*, 85.
31. Article 131: 'Was die Sprache eines Kindes oder Schülers ist, bestimmt ausschliesslich die mündlich oder schriftlich abgegebene Erklärung des Erziehungsberechtigten'; Article 106: 'Erziehungsberechtigten von wenigstens vierzig staatsangehörigen Kindern einer sprachlichen Minderheit unterstützt wird'; Article 133: 'beim Unterricht in den Schulen die nationalen und kulturellen Werte des anderen Teiles vor den Schülern nicht in ungebührlicher Weise herabgesetzt werden' (Junckerstorff, *Schulrecht*, 49–112). The Geneva Convention was published in French in Kaeckenbeeck, 'Convention', 568–822.
32. *Ibid.*, 601.
33. de Gruyter, *Amtliche Sammlung*, vol. 1, VIII.
34. Wanatowicz, 'Województwo śląskie', 241.
35. Böhler, *Wojna domowa*, 259–61. Quote in Haslinger et al., 'Frontiers of Violence', 237.
36. Feinstein, Temin and Toniolo, *World Economy*, 56.
37. *Ibid.*, 43.
38. Henig, *Versailles*, 39–40.
39. *Ibid.*, 42.
40. Jezierski and Leszczyńska, 'Okres', 264; Mrzygłód, 'Harsh Reality', 27–46.
41. Wanatowicz, 'Województwo śląskie', 239; Frużyński, 'Industrializacja'.
42. Wandycz, *United States*, 184.
43. Borodziej, *Geschichte Polens*, 129.
44. Górski, 'Organizacja', 183.
45. APK, 1376/1101 (Ministerstwo Spraw Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego do Magistratu miasta Lubliniec, 10 February 1923), 226.
46. Balace, 'Belgien', 73–102.
47. Marks, *Innocent*, 96.
48. *Ibid.*, X.
49. Pabst, 'Eupen-Malmedy', 266. In addition, Belgium received mandates for Rwanda and Burundi. Mandates were trusteeships invented in Paris for those regions the decision-makers did not consider capable of autonomous government. They were controlled by the League of Nations or an Allied power with a colonial tradition. Rwanda and Burundi were considered a just reward for the efforts of the Congolese army under Belgian command in removing German soldiers from East Africa during the First World War; see Macmillan, *Paris 1919*, 106; van Reybrouck, *Congo*, 145ff.
50. Pawley, *Watch on the Rhine*, 5.
51. Doeppen, *Abtretung*, 66.
52. Balace, 'Belgien', 88.
53. *Ibid.*, 94.
54. In the spring of 1920, a special international commission with representatives from France, Great Britain, Italy and Japan travelled to the regions of Eupen and Sankt Vith in order to establish the exact course of the state border line between Germany and Belgium. The local railway road (Vennbahn) came under Belgian jurisdiction, but five little

enclaves on the western side of the railroad remained under German jurisdiction, most of them as a part of the city of Monschau. These German enclaves could be accessed from Germany without border control (Doepgen, *Abtretung*, 204–13).

55. Doepgen, *Abtretung*, 78–80.
56. *Ibid.*, 5.
57. *Ibid.*, 186.
58. Cremer, 'Annexion', 8; Kartheuser, *Les années 30 à Eupen-Malmedy*, 30; Lentz, *Wahlverhalten*, 27.
59. O'Connell, *Annexation*, 66–67.
60. *Ibid.*, 88.
61. Pabst, 'Eupen-Malmedy', 267. Léon Delacroix, as remembered by Baltia, 'Memoiren', 19.
62. Gerard, 'De democratie gedroomd', 945; de Schaepdrijver, *De groote oorlog*, 294.
63. Quadflieg, 'Elitenkontinuität', 118.
64. Gerard, 'De democratie gedroomd', 957. The Belgian and Polish economies are hard to compare. Charles Hilliard Feinstein, Peter Temin and Gianni Toniolo conclude that in 1929 Belgian output was 30 to 40 per cent higher than it had been before the First World War, whereas in Poland in the same year, pre-war levels had not yet been reached (Feinstein, Temin and Toniolo, *World Economy*, 56). Such a comparison does not shed much light on the structural differences between the economies of the two countries. Whereas Belgium was a largely industrialised country, Poland was largely agricultural (with its industry being concentrated in a couple of urban centres, including Polish Upper Silesia). And whereas the new Polish state needed to integrate three very different infrastructural entities, the Belgian economy could continue to operate within the same structure.
65. Gerard, 'De democratie gedroomd', 989.
66. *Ibid.*, 1111–112.
67. Brüll and Kontny, *Eupen-Malmedy im europäischen Vergleich*, 51.
68. In 1922, 873 people migrated out of the region, of whom 820 went to Germany. Meanwhile, 263 people moved into the region, among whom 210 came from Germany (van Banning, *Gebiedsovergang*, 89). The German census of 1925 included 4,890 people who had lived in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy in 1914 (Lejeune, Rauw and Jousten, 'Die große Suche', 244). The net migration from Germany to the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy amounted to 2,000 inhabitants within the first five years (Brüll and Kontny, *Eupen-Malmedy im europäischen Vergleich*, 51).
69. SE, 651/55/115, Mallinger, L. (Le Conseiller des Sciences et des Arts), Circulaire aux administrations communales N. 9025, 24 August 1922.
70. These official statistics date from 1910. In 1930, illiteracy was reduced to 8.12 per cent. Within the age cohort of 15- to 20-year-old inhabitants, it amounted to 1.17 per cent (Mallinson, *Power*, 131).
71. SE, III/191, 127 (Enseignement. Situation au 10 janvier 1920).
72. Archives diplomatiques (AD), 10.792/ I, Eupen-Malmedy, Léon Xhaflaire to Henri Delvaux de Fenffe, 16 July 1919 (O'Connell, *Annexation*, 66).
73. Gerard, 'De democratie gedroomd', 911.
74. *Ibid.*, 1022–24.
75. de Schaepdrijver, *De groote oorlog*, 304.
76. Beyen, 'Belgium', 342.
77. SE, III/191, 124 (Enseignement. Situation au 10 janvier 1920).
78. van Houtum, 'Mask of the Border', 50.
79. Trzebiatowski, *Szkolnictwo powszechne*, 10; Gerard, 'De democratie gedroomd', 936.

80. de Vroede, 'Language in Education', 116; Ministerstwo Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego, *Oświata*, 133.
81. Fishman, 'Language', 157.
82. Borodziej, *Geschichte Polens*, 131.
83. *Rocznik Statystyki Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, 1924, 219–21. See also Szablicka-Żak, *Szkolnictwo i oświata*, 141.
84. Eser, 'Volk, Staat, Gott!', 277 and 668.
85. Fałęcki, *Niemieckie szkolnictwo mniejszościowe*, 46.
86. Trzebiatowski, *Szkolnictwo powszechne*, 170–77; Zloch, *Polnischer Nationalismus*, vol. 78, 211 and 243.
87. Tomiak, 'Education', 187 and 193.
88. Jakubowska, *Przeobrażenia*, vol. 6, 44–45.
89. Seweryn, 'Zagadnienia', vol. 7, 9.
90. Sanojca, *Relacje*, vol. 16, 124–25.
91. *Dziennik Ustaw*, 1924, Pozycja 766, 1213. Statistics for 1929–1930 show the effect of the Grabski reform. Whereas 82 per cent of schools in Poland taught in Polish, 10 per cent were bilingual. The largest group of these bilingual schools (8.8 per cent) offered teaching in Polish and Ukrainian.
92. Linkiewicz, *Lokalność*, 160.
93. *Ibid.*, 167.
94. Ridna Skola included 33 Ukrainian-speaking private schools at the end of the 1920s and, after its liquidation in the late 1930s, continued to operate as a network of secretly run, and hence illegal, schools (Tomiak, 'Education', 194; Linkiewicz, *Lokalność*, 302).
95. Tomiak, 'Education', 194.
96. Subtelny, *Ukraine*, 339ff.
97. Obrębski, 'Polesie', 367 and 379.
98. Linkiewicz, *Lokalność*, 140–42.
99. Eser, 'Volk, Staat, Gott!', 129.
100. Mauersberg, *Szkolnictwo powszechne*, 163.
101. *Ibid.*, 128–31.
102. Kijek, *Dzieci modernizmu*, 128.
103. Autobiography 3792 (Em. Tępa), 1939, quoted in Kijek, *Dzieci modernizmu*, 136.
104. For a detailed overview, see Tomiak, 'Education', 196–98.
105. Kijek, *Dzieci modernizmu*, 157; Eisenstein, *Jewish Schools*, 84 and 96.
106. When the new educational reform of Janusz Jedrzejewicz foresaw the possibility of closing those private schools which disseminated radical political views, a number of TSYSHO schools were eventually shut down on the accusation of being bulwarks of communist agitation (Eisenstein, *Jewish Schools*, 48–49; Kijek, *Dzieci modernizmu*, 173–87).
107. Article 389, *Dziennik Ustaw*, 1932, 639–45.
108. Scheuermann, *Minderheitenschutz*, 28.
109. Ministerstwo Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego, *Oświata*, 49.
110. Novikov, *Shades*, 48.
111. Borodziej, *Geschichte Polens*, 126.
112. Zloch, *Polnischer Nationalismus*, vol. 78, 288.
113. Wnęk, *Dziecko w polskiej literaturze naukowej*, 61–62; Sobczak, *Nowe wychowanie*, 47–74.
114. Wnęk, *Dziecko w polskiej literaturze naukowej*, 25 and 107. For an example, see Szober, *Zasady nauczania języka*.
115. Translations such as Dewey, *The School and Society* (in Polish 1924); Parkhurst, *Education on the Dalton Plan* (in Polish 1928, second edition 1933); Piaget, *Le langage et la pensée chez l'enfant* (in Polish 1929); Rousseau, *Emile, ou de l'éducation* (in Polish 1933). See also

- Sobczak, *Nowe wychowanie*, 47; Wnęk, *Dziecko w polskiej literaturze naukowej*, 52; Joteyko and Grzegorzewska, *Metody*, vol. 1; Ziemnowicz, *Nauczanie*, vol. 13.
116. Fittbogen, *Schulrecht*, 98.
 117. Schmidt, 'Sprachnationale Konflikte', 408; Mallinson, *Power*, 116–17.
 118. De Vroede cited a ministerial survey conducted in 1906, which found the percentages of these schools in selected cities to be as follows: Kortrijk 11.7 per cent, Ghent 2.2 per cent and Antwerp 0 per cent. The author added that the figures were an underestimation but could nevertheless be considered indicative (de Vroede, 'Language in Education', 117).
 119. Mallinson, *Power*, 114.
 120. Dominguez, 'Comment les imprécisions'.
 121. *De Volksgazet*, 16 October 1929, 1.
 122. Schmidt, 'Sprachnationale Konflikte', 406 and 409.
 123. An official language border was only established in Belgium in 1963. Before, the shape of the language border was determined by the outcome of the language survey organised in 1921, 1931 and 1947.
 124. Bischoff, *Die deutsche Sprache in Belgien*, 59–60; Wenselaers, *De laatste Belgen*, 76.
 125. de Vroede, 'Language in Education', 125.
 126. *Ibid.*, 118.
 127. Bischoff, *Die deutsche Sprache in Belgien*, 18–19; Fittbogen, *Schulrecht*, 88–89.
 128. Pabst, 'Eupen-Malmedy', 303.
 129. Mallinson, *Power*, 127–30.
 130. Depaepe and Simon, 'De Vlaamse jeugd', 311.
 131. van Houtum, 'Mask of the Border', 50.
 132. *Ibid.*, 51.
 133. For the full text of the Geneva Convention in German, see Junckerstorff, *Schulrecht*; in French, see Kaeckenbeeck, 'Convention'.
 134. Junckerstorff, *Schulrecht*, 54–58.
 135. Archiwum Szkoły Podstawowej w Lublińcu (ASPL), School Chronicle, 232–44.
 136. Szczepański, 'Przejście', 297.
 137. *Ibid.*, 300.
 138. *Ibid.*, 296.
 139. *Ibid.*, 301.
 140. *Ibid.*, 302–3.
 141. In the 1934–1935 school year, there were 7,596 primary school children in the Lubliniec district, of whom 1,473, or 19 per cent, attended the primary school in Lubliniec. In 1922, 965 attended the Lubliniec primary school, 595 pupils being instructed in Polish and 270 in German (Bulik and Centerowska, *Szkic monograficzny*, 8). If we assume this constituted 19 per cent of the primary schoolchildren of the district, this would mean that in 1922 5,079 children attended primary schools. The Mixed Commission stated that 1,514 applications had been made to attend German-speaking schools or classes (of which 92 arrived after the deadline). This means applications were made for approximately 30 per cent of the schoolchildren from the district (Gemischte Kommission für Oberschlesien, *Amtliche Sammlung*, vol. 1, 124).
 142. Gemischte Kommission für Oberschlesien, *Amtliche Sammlung*, vol. 1, 144; APK, 27/304, 74 (Wydział Oświecenia Publicznego, Sprawozdanie: Dotyczy Szkoły Mniejszościowej w Koszęcinie, 20 October 1927).
 143. APK, 27/304, 13 (Resignation list composed by Trembaczewski and signed by school principal Jerzy Hejda [undated, between 1922 and 1924]).
 144. Junckerstorff, *Schulrecht*, 53. The Mixed Commission stated that 1,514 applications had been made to attend German-speaking schools or classes (of which 92 arrived after the

- deadline). While the applications of 506 children were approved, those of 633 children were withdrawn, and 427 children were not approved (Gemischte Kommission für Oberschlesien, *Amtliche Sammlung*, vol. 1, 124).
145. *Ibid.*, 124.
 146. Whereas the pupils in Polish classes had made up 70 per cent of the school population in 1922, a decade later, this percentage had grown to 93 per cent (APK 1376/1077, 181 [Liczba dzieci w tut. szkołach, Lubliniec, 30 May 1932]). Initially, seven schools for minority children were set up in the district, but already by 1924 only three remained (ASPL, School Chronicle, 277 [Polonia, *O szkołach mniejszości w Lublinieckim*]); Gemischte Kommission für Oberschlesien, *Amtliche Sammlung*, vol. 1, 230–38.
 147. Novikov, *Shades*, 43.
 148. Kolb, *Weimarer*, 53; Buřhak, 'Sojusze systemu', 45–47.
 149. Mauersberg, *Szkolnictwo powszechne*, 142; Glimos-Nadgórska, *Polskie szkolnictwo*, 80.
 150. Novikov, *Shades*, 90; Glimos-Nadgórska, *Polskie szkolnictwo*, 77–78 and 83.
 151. ASPL, School Chronicle, 249 (Rok szkolny 1922–23, Wrzesień). See also Korzeniowska, 'Historia', 71.
 152. Kamusella, *Isomorphism*, 57.
 153. Paul Poralla quoted in Eser, 'Volk, Staat, Gott!', 569.
 154. APK, 27/304, 16 and 18 (Resignation list composed by Trembaczewski and signed by school principal Jerzy Hejda, between 1922 and 1924).
 155. Junckerstorff, *Schulrecht*, 14 and 167; Orzechowski, 'Nauczycielstwo', 162.
 156. *Ibid.*, 17. See also Glimos-Nadgórska, *Polskie szkolnictwo*, 150.
 157. Olszówka, 'Szkolnictwo polskie', 15.
 158. Dokumentesammlung des Herder-Instituts Marburg (DSHI), Sammlung Jendrike, 80 (Formular Chmiel, Gleidingen, 12 May 1957).
 159. Kolb, *Weimarer*, 184.
 160. Eser, 'Volk, Staat, Gott!', 150.
 161. *Ibid.*, 514.
 162. *Ibid.*, 514–17.
 163. The bonus for immigrating teachers disappeared when the Jędrzejewicz reform was introduced to the Silesian Voivodeship in 1932 (Glimos-Nadgórska, *Polskie szkolnictwo*, 177). In 1925, only 35 per cent of the teachers were local inhabitants (Wanatowicz, *Ludność napływowa*, 60–61 and 71–72).
 164. Zieliński, 'Sprawa polskich', 407–23.
 165. ASPL, School Chronicle (Sprawozdanie z czynności Podkomisji Oświatowej I. Rejonu Konferencyjnego w I. półroczu roku szkolnego 1926/27, Lubliniec, 1927).
 166. Olszówka, 'Szkolnictwo polskie', 20.
 167. Cieńciała, 'Nowa organizacja seminariów nauczycielskich', *Miesięcznik Pedagogiczny*, 1922, vol. 31, 2, 44–47. The special seminars ceased to exist in 1936/37 (Kempa, *Kształcenie nauczycieli*, 69ff.).
 168. Suchowiak, *Niemieckie szkolnictwo*, 63ff.
 169. Eser, 'Volk, Staat, Gott!', 538.
 170. Depaepe, *Order in Progress*, 244.
 171. Olszówka, 'Szkolnictwo polskie', 48.
 172. APK, 1376/1086, 70 (Uchwała Rady Miejskiej w Lublińcu z dnia 3 March 1933).
 173. Glimos-Nadgórska, *Polskie szkolnictwo*, 116–17. The Katowice diocese was founded in 1925 (Myszor, *Historia*, 194–95).
 174. The letter is quoted by Novikov, *Shades*, 53–54.
 175. Bjork, *Neither German*, 66–67.
 176. Struve, 'Erfahrung', 140–41.

177. Kaeckenbeeck, 'Convention', 623.
178. Czembor, *Ewangelicki Kościół Unijny*, 44–47.
179. The Protestant parish in Lubliniec was the smallest parish in Polish Upper Silesia. It consisted of 178 parishioners in 1936, which was merely 14 per cent of the number in 1918 (Czembor, *Ewangelicki Kościół Unijny*, 46). In the nineteenth century, there was a Jewish school in Lubliniec for a short period of time, but it was later abolished (Korzeniowska, 'Historia', 64). The school chronicle of the bilingual school in Lubliniec does not mention Jewish pupils.
180. ASPL, School Chronicle, 286.
181. Polak-Springer, *Recovered*, 26; Winkel, *Corpsalbum*, 241.
182. Kaeckenbeeck, *International Experiment*, 341.
183. *Ibid.*, 342. For instance, it would take until 1932 before the first secondary school offering education in Polish opened in German Upper Silesia; until then, up to 100 pupils attended a secondary boarding school on the Polish side of the state border line in Lubliniec (Janik, 'Zespół Szkół', 5; Jaworski et al., *Deutsche und Polen*, doc. 282: Leitendes Grenzkommissariat Oppeln an den Oberpräsidenten ebendort. Polnische Bewegung im Kreis Oppeln, 832–34).
184. Kneip, *Die deutsche Sprache*, 136.
185. Korowicz, *Górnośląska ochrona Mniejszości*, 85.
186. Kaeckenbeeck, *International Experiment*, 342–43.
187. 'Die Wacht am Rhein' was a German patriotic anthem popular during the Franco-Prussian war in the late nineteenth century and during the First World War. The original poem was written by Max Schneckenburger in 1840; the music was composed by Karl Wilhelm four years later.
188. Heutz, 'Jugenderinnerungen', 34.
189. *Ibid.* The coat of arms of Belgium bears a lion, whereas the coat of arms of Germany displays a black eagle.
190. Fittbogen, *Schulrecht*, 28.
191. Wenselaers, *De laatste Belgen*, 52; Ministère de l'Intérieur belge, *Statistique de la Belgique*, 562–65.
192. Fittbogen, *Schulrecht*, 29.
193. *Ibid.*, 28; SE, Gouvernement Eupen-Malmedy, C.3.3.119, 29 (Eupener Zeitung, 13 March 1923); Warny, *Belgiens wiedergefundene Brüder*, 242–43.
194. SE, III/191, 127 (Enseignement. Situation au 10 janvier 1920); Pabst, 'Eupen-Malmedy', 293. The argument that Flanders and Eupen belonged together was repeated in Flemish nationalist circles throughout the 1920s and 1930s (Mouton et al., 'Ein Blick von Aussen', 100–102).
195. Herman Baltia quoted in Wenselaers, *De laatste Belgen*, 58.
196. Christmann, 'Presse', 70ff.
197. Pabst, 'Eupen-Malmedy', 306; SE, Gouvernement Eupen-Malmedy, C.3.3.150, 2 (Gazette de Liège, 263, 22 November 1921); Stadtarchiv Aachen (SA), Nachlass Benker, 23/75–76, unpaged (T. Gierets to Stadtbüroinspektor Benker, Aachen, 3 February 1930); SE, Gouvernement Eupen-Malmedy, I. 3 / 28 (die Ausführung des Gesetzes über Schulzwang [10 April 1944]).
198. Fittbogen, *Schulrecht*, 111; SE, EN 647/55/88 (Letter of Mayor Léon Xhaflaire to Nikolaus Claessen, 26 November 1925).
199. SE, Gouvernement Eupen-Malmedy, C.3.3.151, 13 ('Zur Eupener Volksschule. Einführung des französischen Unterrichts', Eupener Zeitung, 125, 20 August 1921); Melchior, 'Realprogramm', 64.
200. Fittbogen, *Schulrecht*, 146.

201. SE, III/191, 127 (Enseignement. Situation au 10 janvier 1920).
202. Pabst, 'Eupen-Malmedy', 289ff.
203. SE, Gouvernement Eupen-Malmedy, C.3.3.150, unpagéd ('Notre Effort à Malmédý', *L'Express*, November 1920, 1).
204. SE, III/191, 127 (Enseignement. Situation au 10 janvier 1920).
205. Fittbogen, *Schulrecht*, 28.
206. Pabst, 'Eupen-Malmedy', 273.
207. Timmermann speaks of six teachers who remained versus 126 teachers who left for Germany (Timmermann, *Zur nationalen Integration*, 203). See also Pabst, 'Eupen-Malmedy', 300; van Banning, *Gebiedsovergang*, 44; Melchior, 'Realprogramm', 61; Lejeune, 'Abtretung', 60 and 74.
208. Fittbogen, *Schulrecht*, 32; Pabst, 'Eupen-Malmedy', 301.
209. SE, Baltia-Fonds, 193, 'Zweiter Tätigkeitsbericht des Gouvernements der Gebiete Eupen und Malmédý', 10 July 1920 – End of July 1921, 91–92.
210. The measure would remain in place until 1930 (Pabst, 'Eupen-Malmedy', 306). See also Kartheuser, *Les années 30 à Eupen-Malmedy*, 22; SE, Gouvernement Eupen-Malmedy, January 1923 (I,4), Baltia, H., 'Décret instituant un examen spécial pour certains agents de l'enseignement ne possédant pas le diplôme final d'instituteur', 20 December 1923.
211. Pabst, 'Eupen-Malmedy', 306; Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde (BABL), R 57/1051, 3. Léon Mallinger, Baltia's assistant responsible for school affairs, was a 'great friend' of Jules Destrée, the Belgian minister responsible for culture and education at the time (Willems, 'Un grand ami', 69–95; Pabst, 'Eupen-Malmedy', 294).
212. Doeppen, *Abtretung*, 148ff.; Lejeune, *Die Deutsch-Belgischen Kulturbeziehungen*.
213. Melchior, 'Realprogramm', 76; O'Connell, *Annexation*, 186.
214. BABL, 1051, 36, unpagéd (Von den Schulen Eupens, 1927, 3).
215. Depaepe, *Order in Progress*, 244.
216. Hennen and Knauf, *Templerkloster*, 35.
217. Massenaux, 'Blick auf das Schulwesen', 17ff.
218. SE, Gouvernement Eupen-Malmedy, C.3.3.156, 19 (Eupener Nachrichten, 173, 30 July 1924); SE, Gouvernement Eupen-Malmedy, C.3.3.156, 15 (Eupener Zeitung, 22–23 July 1924); *Sankt Vith Volkszeitung*, 2 September 1924, 1.
219. Bendix, *Max Weber*, vol. 2, 382–83; Brüll, 'La référence à l'Alsace-Lorraine'.
220. On Protestants, see SE, EN 717/37, Kirchenrat der evangelischen Gemeinde Eupen, 17 February 1926. On Jews, see Brüll, 'Eupen-Malmedy', 311.
221. van Wageningen and Vandooren, 'Korte Geschiedenis'.
222. SE, 647/55/87 (Protocol of the City Council of Eupen, 23 February 1932).
223. SE, 647/55/87 (Sir Bivart aus Evangelische Kirchengemeinde zu Eupen an Herrn Kreisschulinspektor Lousberg, 9 October 1931).
224. Elden and Crampton, 'Introduction', 2.
225. Christmann, 'Presse', 457.

SCAPING THE BORDER



In the mid-1920s, a verbal battle over the recruitment of borderland pupils to either Polish-speaking or German-speaking primary schools escalated in interwar Polish Upper Silesia, involving local, regional, national and supranational authorities, as well as individual children, parents and teachers. Whereas many fought that battle out of a belief that an intertwining of one language, one nation and one state would legitimate their nation-state, others vehemently rejected such categorisations.¹ Statesmen, administrators and lawyers in Geneva developed a detailed understanding of Polish Upper Silesia during this period. Of the more than 1,200 requests and petitions handled by the League of Nations between 1920 and 1939, more than 300 came from Poland, with most being sent in between 1926 and 1932, and the battle over primary schools in Polish Upper Silesia played a prominent role in these deliberations.² A detailed analysis of the dispute will illustrate how the search for meaning through categorisation that obsessed so many people ultimately caused meaning to collapse altogether. The main purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that meaning over language learning in primary schooling imploded just as much in the Belgian border regions of Eupen, Sankt-Vith and Malmedy as it did in Polish Upper Silesia. Accordingly, it is argued here that although the system of power that came into being was very different, it evolved in a similar way.

The analysis is worked out with the help of key concepts introduced within the three axes of comparison elaborated in the second chapter of this book. Much attention is devoted to human territoriality, which is here approached through the prism of Alexander Murphy's complementary understanding of Robert Sack's and Claude Raffestin's concepts. The chapter begins by describing how the state border lines through which Polish Upper Silesia and Eupen-Malmedy had come into being following the Treaty of Versailles were challenged in the mid-1920s, but neverthe-

Notes for this chapter begin on page 149.

less remained in place. The Locarno Agreements laid bare the fact there was no alternative politico-geographical framework for the European continent. The interwar patchwork of nation-states was a 'highly sticky system', in which borderland inhabitants needed to accept or renegotiate power structures and power strategies within the individual nation-states to which they now belonged.³

The chapter then homes in on the dynamics of negotiations regarding borderland pupils' language learning in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and shows how these dynamics bore similarities in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy. In both case study borderlands, a circulation of divisions over language learning policies and practices was driven by the desire of borderland inhabitants to acquire as much autonomy as possible, as described in Claude Raffestin's understanding of human territoriality. Raffestin's definition of human territoriality reads: 'the ensemble of relations that a society maintains with exteriority and alterity for the satisfaction of its needs, towards the end of attaining the greatest possible autonomy comparable with the resources of the system'.⁴ Human territorialities can be found in the diverse and changing interactions between human beings and 'material and/or immaterial reality'.⁵

Language learning in this chapter is interpreted both as a material reality codified in schools, teaching branches, textbooks, language exams, school curricula and suchlike, and as an immaterial reality of ideas on education and styles of teaching. The research will show who was in a position to change borderland pupils' social environment and under which circumstances. Throughout the chapter, it will be shown how the actions of state institutions and individuals in both case study borderlands not only accentuated the abnormalities and contradictions in language learning rules, but also intensified them. As a result, the physical border regions became the focal points for battles over a demarcation of the inside and the outside that was of wider significance within and beyond the Polish and Belgian nation-states. Despite the obsession with developing an abundance of legal rules on language learning for borderland pupils, however, state institutions, interest groups and individuals were unable to prevent legal normativity from crumbling.⁶

In order to compare the dynamics of negotiations over language learning in Polish Upper Silesia with those in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, attention first needs to be paid to how these negotiations appeared within different spaces. This requires an in-depth reconstruction of the specific system of power in each of the two case study borderlands along the second and third axes of analysis (namely, 'power and multiple loyalties' and 'microhistory within a multilayered context') of the frame-

work of comparison. The reconstruction enables us to understand how within two different systems of power, decisions were made at different levels of decision-making and were documented differently as well.

In the case of Polish Upper Silesia, thanks to the protection measures for national minorities laid down in the Minority Treaty and the Geneva Convention, an arena was set up in which grievances were aired and a variety of factors were documented in great detail: the perpetual efforts to forge ever more precise language learning policies, the changing motives of guardians when deciding which primary school to send their children to, and the compulsory language test results of individual borderland pupils. Meanwhile, in decisions over primary education that fell outside the remit of the League of Nations, it was increasingly the new governor of Polish Upper Silesia since 1926, Michał Grażyński, who had a decisive say. He opted for the power strategy of domination in order to define the place of the region within the power structure of the new Polish Second Republic. As was the case in the rest of interwar Poland, that power structure was heavily influenced by developments within the three empires to which the now Polish lands had previously belonged. In Polish Upper Silesia, for example, Grażyński put much effort into reducing the influence of the Catholic Church on the language education of borderland pupils, which had strengthened within Silesia, but not the Kingdom of Poland, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.⁷

In the case of the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, the system of power was very different. As will be shown in greater detail, these newly acquired borderlands lost their status of political and administrative autonomy in 1925 and were integrated within the district of Verviers in the province of Liège. Borderland inhabitants now received the right to participate in Belgian elections, but their representation in national politics was severely restricted. However, educational policymaking in Belgium was highly decentralised and offered councils of cities and municipalities significant decision-making capacity. As a result, borderland inhabitants in Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were able to show political agency by making their own decisions over language learning in local primary schools. In contrast to Polish Upper Silesia, where the battle over language learning was fought over the language capacities of individual borderland children, here it was primarily fought over schools and their programmes of foreign language learning. Whereas the language tests in Polish Upper Silesia could provoke individual borderland pupils to question the manifestation of power, thus possibly influencing their future expressions of loyalty, in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, the individual child was not the focus of concern. Moreover, whereas authorities in Polish Upper Silesia opted for the power strategy of domination in order to

bring about a stable Polish Second Republic, within Belgium, the power strategy of prevention was used in order to guarantee the preservation of the power balance, such as, for example, between the Belgian state and the Catholic Church.

In calling this chapter ‘scaping the border’, what is being emphasised is the first meaning of the suffix ‘-scape’ in the word ‘borderscape’, the continuous multidimensional dynamics involved in ‘shaping and carving’ the border, since language learning for borderland pupils took the form of a battle within and between different layers of decision-making.⁸ The outcome of that battle, as we will see, was a circulation of social divisions within networks reaching well beyond the physical borderlands. The battle laid bare the contradictions and inconsistencies of existing systems of power but did not overcome them. In this period of time, the two case study borderlands did not show themselves to be spaces where the border was approached as a resource.⁹ The chapter will end with a discussion of the most important new textbooks designed for borderland pupils at the time and how they did not display cultural innovation. Within these textbooks, the aggregated representation of the border, as referred to in the second meaning of scape,¹⁰ was one of fragmentation.

Challenging the State Border Line

The Polish-German and Belgian-German state border lines, newly drawn in the aftermath of the First World War, faced two important challenges in the mid-1920s. For inhabitants in both Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, the meaning of the state border line changed as a result of international negotiations. Moreover, significant amounts of financial and material support for primary school children in Polish Upper Silesia and in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were now being sent in from Germany with the purpose of challenging primary school policies in the two countries. At the same time, the number of pupils from Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy crossing the state border line in order to receive their primary education in Germany was limited and did not challenge borderland school education.

Polish Upper Silesia

In 1925, the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gustav Stresemann, proposed to the Allied partners that they revise the Weimar Republic’s western borders. Negotiations resulted in the Locarno Treaties, which stated

that the geographical disposition established under the Treaty of Versailles was inviolable, led to Allied occupation troops withdrawing from the Rhineland in 1930, and facilitated Germany's membership of the League of Nations.¹¹ Although the Locarno Treaties secured Germany's western border, Polish state representatives noted with concern the weakening in the international order's capability to protect Polish sovereignty. The Locarno Treaties did indeed increase the uncertain status of Germany's eastern borders. At the very moment when Germany entered the League of Nations, France, which had formed the spine of Polish and Czechoslovakian foreign policy, withdrew from its obligations in Central Europe.¹² Gustav Stresemann used the League's international position to legitimise the protection of what he considered ethnic Germans living outside the Weimar Republic, especially in the East.¹³ Stresemann's ambition was to turn the League of Nations into an international defender of their rights, despite its having been established as a prudent interlocutor in minority protection.¹⁴

An additional challenge was the German tax money that had increasingly been invested in borderland pupils in Polish Upper Silesia since the mid-1920s. This relief arrived at a time when Polish Upper Silesia's international economic competitiveness was in decline, and intensified during the financial crisis of the late 1920s. By 1924, Poland's economic situation started to improve. Throughout the 1920s, the average gross domestic product per capita in Germany remained more than the double the Polish one, but the difference steadily diminished.¹⁵ A monetary reform in 1924 succeeded in getting inflation in Poland under control. A new currency was introduced, the zloty, and the fact that 30 per cent of its value was sustained by gold or foreign exchange engendered the prospect of economic stabilisation.¹⁶ However, merely a year later, German statesmen imposed a tariff on Polish products and suspended the import of Silesian coal, after which the Polish government abolished the tax relief for goods imported from Germany. Since Polish Upper Silesia was more dependent on industry than the rest of Poland, these measures hit the region hard, and while the new market for Silesian coal in Scandinavia mitigated the damage, it could not undo it.¹⁷ Later in the 1920s, Germany agreed to more favourable import and export rates, but soon afterwards the global financial crisis reached Poland.¹⁸ Whereas German decision-makers devalued the mark in the early 1930s, Polish bankers never relinquished the gold standard for the zloty in an attempt to remain attractive for foreign capital and be able to pay off its foreign debts.¹⁹ These developments caused Polish products to lose their competitiveness on the German market, and brought about a reduction in Polish government spending. As a result, in 1933, Polish exports were at 38 per cent of where they had been in 1928.²⁰

The economic conflict over Upper Silesia ended in 1934, when Germany needed raw materials in order to build up its economic power, and all zinc mines lay on the Polish side of the Upper Silesian border.²¹

A close look at the school chronicle of the bilingual school in Lubliniec shows us how relief measures now launched in the name of the Polish and German nations dwarfed the efforts of previously established grassroots aid initiatives. Children attending the German-speaking branch were wealthier, better clothed, and therefore less ill during winter than pupils enrolled in the Polish-speaking branch. Moreover, the girls in the Polish-speaking branch were more often absent than boys because they needed to help at home.²² In order to reduce the number of absences of pupils attending Polish-speaking branches, Silesian authorities provided material support.²³ By the end of the 1920s, during the economic recession, a third of all such children in Polish Upper Silesia received food for free.²⁴ Another important product distributed through Polish aid programmes was shoes.²⁵

These relief measures were initially small, if compared to the aid offered by local pro-German welfare organisations supported by German state subsidies, such as the Association for Germanness Abroad (*Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland* – hereinafter VDA).²⁶ This organisation initially arose in the 1880s, ceased to exist during the First World War, and resumed work in 1925 in order to promote German culture abroad. The phantom pain caused by Germany's loss of territory, as well as the decrease in birth rates within the Weimar Republic, generated social support for the investment of German tax money in the education of children abroad.²⁷ From 1926 onwards, the *Volksbund* became an active distributor of aid, not least within German-speaking schools.²⁸ Outdoing German aid providers became an important aim for Silesian authorities, one they managed to achieve. The coordinator of the German school association in Polish Upper Silesia, Andreas Dudek, wrote in 1935 that its budget was smaller than the 77,700 Polish zloty of their Polish competitor.²⁹

On the other hand, borderland pupils crossing the state border line in order to receive their education in German Upper Silesia were perceived as more of a challenge than they really were. There was no incentive for inhabitants in Polish Upper Silesia to receive their education in Polish across the border because, as has been shown in the previous chapter, education in Polish there was provided merely to fulfil the requirements of the Geneva Convention and lacked initiators and leaders. Given the political pressure on the German-speaking school system in Polish Upper Silesia, there could have been an incentive for inhabitants of Polish Upper Silesia to send their children to a German-speaking school in German Upper

Silesia, but three factors impeded most children from doing so. The reason most well documented in archival sources is that Polish state officials prevented borderland pupils from crossing by means of control measures. Despite the fact that Polish Upper Silesia boasted the highest percentage of children fulfilling their school obligations within the Polish Second Republic, and that the Geneva Convention guaranteed pupils' right to receive education abroad, school principals needed to keep detailed records of school absences. Parents were penalised for these absences not out of a concern that their children would remain illiterate, but because children's 'souls' were not to be 'stolen'.³⁰ In addition, policemen searched for children who had started education in Germany without having been given the permission of Silesian authorities.³¹ In the bilingual school of Lubliniec, one such case was eventually brought to court. The mother of Ernest and Helena Rataj was found guilty and fined the equivalent of a third of an assistant teacher's monthly salary. When she was unable to pay, she was imprisoned for four days.³²

Although sources do not document this as accurately, the fact that children needed to work in their after-school hours may well have been a more prevailing reason for not attending primary schools across the state border line. Every member of the family had his or her tasks on the farm, Józef Ulfik observed in his elaborate chronicle of life in the village of Koszęcin.³³ However, children workers seem to have been recruited orally instead of through local newspapers. It would not be a cowherd or domestic servant, the most common types of child workers, who responded to a rare job announcement for an office boy in the Lubliniec weekly newspaper but someone 'from a good Polish family and with sufficient education'.³⁴ Domestic service and farm work appear to have remained undocumented. Child workers only appear in archival sources when something extraordinary happened, such as when the three-year-old child of a master plumber in Lubliniec fell into a barrel full of water because the domestic servant had not been paying enough attention, with the child having to be rescued by two eleven-year-old girls passing by, an incident mentioned in one of the biggest newspapers of the German national minority in Polish Upper Silesia, the *Kattowitzer Zeitung*.³⁵

Another reason to prefer a Polish education in Polish Upper Silesia to a German education in German Upper Silesia was the hope among Silesian inhabitants that they were now living in a socially just country in which they no longer had to assimilate to the culture of their German-speaking superiors in order to be able to advance professionally.³⁶ It was believed that more people holding a degree in higher education were needed in order to establish a Polish-speaking intelligentsia in the borderlands.³⁷

Whereas secondary school education had previously been reserved for the wealthy, it could now be enjoyed by socially underprivileged children.³⁸

The Regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy

Because Belgian politicians played an ambivalent role in the international appeasement during the Locarno talks in the middle of the 1920s, the Belgian-German state border line was also challenged, and although its physical location remained in place, its meaning did change considerably for the inhabitants of the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy. In addition, since Belgium was and remained in a better economic position than Germany, the financial and material support sent in from Germany for borderland children could not seriously challenge the Belgian educational system, as it did in Polish Upper Silesia. And although borderland children were not hindered in receiving their education on the other side of the state border line, as the borderland children of Polish Upper Silesia were, few actually went. Each of these three aspects will now be examined more closely.

The Belgian National Bank had set a disadvantageous exchange rate for the German occupation marks issued during the First World War in the belief that the cost would soon be paid by Germany, but no international support was found in Versailles in order to regulate this pending issue. Belgian politicians therefore secretly asked Stresemann to resolve Belgium's monetary situation in exchange for the retrocession of the German language zone of Eupen-Malmedy.³⁹ Stresemann offered 200 billion German gold marks for the region.⁴⁰ The negotiations leaked out and caused an international uproar because it had not been foreseen in Versailles that states would redraw their borders voluntarily. French state representatives argued that Germany's western borders were the safeguard of Europe's political stabilisation and succeeded in annulling the deal.⁴¹ These negotiations also caused an uproar within the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, not least because one of the Belgian statesmen in favour of the retrocession, Léon Delacroix, had welcomed the regions within the Belgian Kingdom in his former capacity of Prime Minister.⁴² In 1929, the idea of retrocession re-emerged during talks about the reparation debts Germany owed to Belgium after the First World War, but it was swept from the table.⁴³ Two years later, a new strategy for Belgium's military defence was implemented, prescribing that in the case of a German attack, the kingdom would not defend its eastern state border line but settle for the defence of the lands up to the Meuse and Scheldt rivers, thereby voluntarily giving up three Wallonian provinces, including the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy. Having been heavily discussed

in the media for the next two years, this strategy was changed to a defence of Belgium's state border lines in 1933.⁴⁴ All these measures caused deep confusion among borderland inhabitants about the kind of integration Belgian state representatives had in mind.

Compared to the prospect of a change in state sovereignty, the financial aid for borderland children being sent in from Germany was less of a disturbing factor in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy than it was in Polish Upper Silesia. The average GDP per capita remained significantly higher in Belgium than in Germany until the 1930s.⁴⁵ In 1926, the Belgian government launched a monetary sanitation programme, which restored the competitiveness of Belgian companies and led to an economic boom.⁴⁶ Local businesses in Eupen-Malmedy benefitted from the improved economic situation, thanks to which the tariffs Germany introduced in 1925 did not put a burden on their activities, as was the case in Polish Upper Silesia. The financial crisis at the end of the 1920s, however, hit Belgium – an export country par excellence – particularly hard. At the deepest point of the recession, in 1931–1932, up to 40 per cent of insured employees were unemployed.⁴⁷ It was only during this recession that Belgian politicians began to complain that the Treaty of Versailles had done little to assist Eupen-Malmedy with its economic transition.⁴⁸ The tariff barrier Germany erected during the world economic crisis especially disturbed the borderlands; local businesses appeared unable to reorient their export flows during recession.⁴⁹ Belgian politicians ran budget deficits in order to offer relief measures to Belgian citizens. These support measures were relatively higher than in Poland and Germany and made the Belgian regime more attractive among inhabitants in the new borderlands.⁵⁰ The German tax money sent over the state border line could not yet compete with that attractiveness on a mass scale; nevertheless, it planted some seeds. Supported by a yearly budget of around 60,000 German marks, organisations tied to Germany started to blossom in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy after the abolition of the Baltia regime.⁵¹ The goal of the biggest of these organisations, the Heimatbund, illustrates just how intermingled culture and politics had become. Upon its founding in 1926, it aimed to promote 'cultural and thus also political *Selbsthilfe*' (self-help) for borderland inhabitants, including children.⁵²

It thus needs to be underlined that the economic reality in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, and therefore also the living conditions of borderland pupils, were substantially different. Instead of archival documents about the distribution of shoes among poor pupils, in the city archive of Eupen, we find a document issued by a school principal in 1931, reporting that he sent some of his pupils home because they had turned up at school wearing sandals without socks.⁵³

The third phenomenon, the cross-border mobility of borderland pupils, was approached differently in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy than in Polish Upper Silesia. Since the Belgian-German border had been secured by the Locarno Treaties, Herman Baltia's ban on attending primary schools in Germany was lifted in 1928. Now that Belgium's eastern borderlands were an integral part of the Belgian state, moreover, the right of guardians to choose their children's school needed to be guaranteed.⁵⁴ Belgian authorities did not question these choices or require schools to keep detailed lists of school absences. Nor did Belgian policemen penalise parents for sending their children to a school across the state border line. And while for those borderland pupils in and around Malmedy who preferred their education in French, a primary school in Germany was, by definition, not an option, there were a couple of factors that diminished the appeal of attending a primary school in Germany for borderland pupils who wanted their education in German.

Aside from the better economic situation in Belgium, the mentality of rural borderland inhabitants made such a crossing less likely.⁵⁵ Work was an essential part of the everyday life of many borderland children, and the legal demarcation line between a schoolchild (six to fourteen years of age) and a working child was somewhat blurred in practice. In interviews conducted with adults who grew up in the late 1920s and 1930s, many respondents recalled how their parents taught them the virtue of work from early on.⁵⁶ In the regional journal *Sankt Vith's Zeitung*, advertisements for young male and female cowherds, who took care of the cattle in their hours after school and during harvest season, were regularly printed.⁵⁷ A second reason can be found in the lack of any prospect of social advancement through an education in German. The largest and most prestigious secondary school in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, the Bishop's College in Eupen, for example, witnessed only sixty-eight pupils successfully finishing their school curriculum between 1924 and 1936.⁵⁸ The training provided by the Bishop's College was intended to reinforce the distance between social and confessional classes by reducing the number of secondary school degree holders in comparison to Prussian times in order to guarantee a consolidation of Catholic order.⁵⁹

In sum, the Polish-German and Belgian-German state border lines drawn in the aftermath of the First World War were challenged by the course of the state border line and its meaning in terms of border security, transnational flows of relief measures and cultural support for borderland pupils, and the pupils crossing the state border line in order to receive their education in Germany. In Polish Upper Silesia, it was primarily the transnational flow of material and financial support that posed the greatest challenge to the Silesian authorities, leading to an intensive arms race in spending

on relief measures for borderland pupils. In the regions of Eupen and Sankt Vith, by contrast, the secret negotiations over a possible retrocession provoked deep confusion among borderland inhabitants. The historian Victor O'Connell has come to the ostensibly paradoxical conclusion that for as long as Baltia was spreading his quasi-colonial rule over Belgium's eastern borderlands, there was at least a policy for these regions, whereas from the moment they were fully administratively integrated within the Belgian Kingdom, their future was in the hands of politicians often acting opportunistically in order to keep their own heads above water within the fragile and rapidly changing coalition governments.⁶⁰ Crossing the state border line to receive a primary education was not a major phenomenon in either of the borderlands at the time, not primarily because borderland pupils were prevented from crossing, but because they needed to take up work after school.⁶¹

Immaterial Reality: Ideas on Education and Language

After an investigation of the different ways in which the state border lines through which Polish Upper Silesia and Eupen-Malmedy came into existence were challenged in the mid-1920s, this chapter moves on to an analysis of the negotiations between institutions, teachers, parents and children over language learning through 'immaterial reality'.⁶² In order to understand the role of ideas on education and language within the language learning policies and practices of relevance for the two borderlands, the reader first needs to be introduced to the discussions taking place at the national level. In the second half of the 1920s, governments in both Poland and Belgium were indeed discussing their ideas on education and language for primary school children, although they had not yet managed to formulate or implement them. Within these discussions, the inhabitants of Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy complicated the matter by exposing just how fragmented the Polish Second Republic and the Belgian Kingdom actually were.

Poland

During the first years of the Second Polish Republic, coalition governments succeeded each other too rapidly to enable the implementation of a programme of national or state upbringing, but that changed in the spring of 1926 when Piłsudski staged a coup promising to 'sanitise' political culture: to save it from corruption and to re-establish economic stability.⁶³ Paradoxically enough, the man who had stood up against anti-democratic

forces during and in the aftermath of the First World War now started to make use of such forces in order to consolidate his so-called Sanacja regime.⁶⁴ The kind of authoritarianism Piłsudski developed over the following years has been referred to as 'extra-constitutional' because executive power gradually hollowed out constitutional rights.⁶⁵ Schools became important instruments in the hands of the state enabling the training of a new generation of future citizens who shared Sanacja ideology.

Some leading scientists at the time supported Sanacja ideology. They strove to create primary schools where pupils were to discover their individual capacities in order to support and further develop the norms of the new state.⁶⁶ In his book *The Sociology of Education*, published in 1928, Florian Znaniecki stated that education was 'an activity seeking to influence people's behaviour'.⁶⁷ He considered it a matter of the utmost importance to let children discover and develop their creative capacities. In working together, these creative individuals would then be able to form a society capable of dealing with its own problems.⁶⁸ The pedagogue Henryk Rowid published a book about the 'creative school' in 1926, which was mainly based on Helen Parkhurst's Dalton Plan, and aimed to develop pupils' social skills and foster their feelings of responsibility for the community.⁶⁹ He was paid by the Polish Ministry of Education to make the newest pedagogical insights from around the world available to Polish teachers by editing pedagogical journals and lecturing at summer schools for Polish teachers.⁷⁰ According to another influential pedagogue at the time, Zygmunt Mysłakowski, the new Polish state could only be built on the basis of the rich cultures of non-Polish speakers.⁷¹

During the brainstorming process to establish suitable pedagogical methods for pupils in the Second Polish Republic, Polish Upper Silesia hardly played a role. The border region did not turn into a laboratory where creative propositions emerged on how the traditions and practices of non-Polish and bilingual speakers could be employed in order to raise pupils who would embody the virtues of the Sanacja regime. A good example is the Pedagogical Institute (Instytut Pedagogiczny) erected in Katowice in 1928 with the purpose of disseminating new pedagogical ideas among teachers in Polish Upper Silesia. In the first years of its existence, it published translations of Western pedagogical works, such as the Belgian guidebook *Towards a Reformed School. A First Step*,⁷² but it would take until the 1930s before the work of Polish scientists reached Silesian primary schools and research on education within Silesian schools would be conducted.

In Polish Upper Silesia, the political camp of the Endecja, the National Democrats, resisted reform pedagogy. The new governor Michał Grażyński, who originated from Galicia and had been active in the Sile-

sian Uprisings, made use of his increased capacity for decision-making following the change in Poland's state structure after the coup to develop an educational policy rooted in Endecja ideology.⁷³ Although he was a supporter of the Sanacja regime, Grażyński was able to introduce a policy that in practice resembled an Endecja policy in the only region in the Second Polish Republic enjoying autonomous decision-making over educational matters. The political conflict at the time was indeed not only an ideological one but also a spatial one rooted in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century activities of Polish national movements. Whereas the Endecja had been the dominant Polish-minded political movement in Prussia (and later the German Empire), the political factions which later grouped together in the Sanacja camp had developed their activities within the Russian Empire (more precisely in the Kingdom of Poland) and the province of Galicia within the Habsburg Empire.⁷⁴ In the particular context of Polish Upper Silesia, Sanacja policy bore many similarities to Endecja policy.

Michał Grażyński did, however, make use of the Sanacja practice of governing to flout the rule of law. This allowed him to accelerate the Polonisation of national minorities. Grażyński also tried to break the hegemonic position of the Roman Catholic Church in Polish Upper Silesia, thereby repudiating the Endecja's stance on religion. The Catholic Church manifested itself as an increasingly fierce antagonist of liberal concepts of education, especially after Pope Pius XI spoke against pedagogical neutrality in 1929.⁷⁵ While clergymen found support for their resistance among the National Democrats in the rest of Poland, in Polish Upper Silesia this support was not forthcoming. Grażyński's obsession transformed Wojciech Korfanty, the leader of the largest party in the Silesian Parliament, into a popular precursor of regional and religious autonomy.⁷⁶ In the Lubliniec district, as was the case in Polish Upper Silesia in general, Korfanty's party enjoyed more political support than Grażyński's.⁷⁷ Although this did create a power battle between the governor and parliament, national, linguistic and religious tensions increasingly began to be resolved outside participative bodies of decision-making by Grażyński, who was gradually turning into a local autocrat, and protests against his decisions aired at the Mixed Commission, the League of Nations, and the International Court in The Hague.⁷⁸

Belgium

Whereas political discussions about language learning in Poland concentrated on competing ideas of education, in Belgium, they focused primarily on the use of language. The unpleasant legacy of collaborationism

during the First World War had silenced the political aspirations of Flemish nationalists for almost a decade, but in the late 1920s they put their minimum programme again on the agenda. In 1928, a law on language use within the army was approved. It introduced monolingual (French-, Dutch- or German-speaking) war units and required army officers to be bilingual (in French and Dutch) but continued to position French as the sole language of command.⁷⁹ The law came about through arduous compromise-oriented negotiations in the coalition government. As a result, Catholic and liberal circles began to contemplate an alternative to mass democracy, one in which Flemish nationalism and socialism would be prevented from further influencing political practice.⁸⁰ The threat of Flemish nationalism increased when August Borms, a Flemish collaborationist who had been sentenced to life in prison, won an interim election for a seat in the Antwerp city council following the death of his predecessor. His election was, however, abrogated in the run-up to the parliamentary elections of 1929 because it had taken place before the discussion in the Belgian Chamber of Representatives over a proposed law to annul the sentences of collaborationists, a majority of whom were Flemish. Afraid that Flemish nationalists would benefit from the tumult, the socialist opposition party published a blueprint for a framework on the use of languages: *Le Compromis des Belges*. While the monolingual status of Wallonia needed to be preserved, Flanders was to be given bilingual status, and the decennial *talentelling* (language survey) would determine the language status of Brussels and municipalities situated along language borders.⁸¹

Out of fear that political representatives of the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy would complicate political decision-making within the Belgian Parliament and Senate, borderland inhabitants, while entitled to participate in elections, were denied favourable conditions of representation. This decision was made after the new national government revoked the border region's autonomous status in 1925 and prescribed its inclusion into the province of Liège, despite Herman Baltia's conviction that it would take at least two decades to integrate Eupen-Malmedy into the Belgian Kingdom.⁸² The socialist party in particular considered it no longer acceptable that the Belgian Kingdom included an autonomous entity entirely left to the devices of a High Commissioner, against whose decisions the Belgian government had no right to appeal, and expressed the fear that denying borderland inhabitants the right to participate in political decisions would fuel irredentism.⁸³ The regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were included in the voting district of Verviers, and 75 per cent of local voters would need to opt for the same candidate in order to see him elected.⁸⁴ Mainly thanks to the votes of the newest cohort of Belgian voters, Marc Somerhausen, born in the vicinity of Brussels as the son of a

German lawyer, who had completed his studies at the German school in Brussels, spent the war years outside the country, and joined the Belgian Socialist Party in the early 1920s, was elected for two terms (1925–1929 and later 1932–1936). Through an interpellation in the Belgian Parliament in March 1927, he requested a plebiscite on self-determination in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy. The discussion following his request exposed the difference of opinion within the coalition government between the Catholic and Socialist parties.⁸⁵ While the Catholic Party did not consider the socialist Marc Somerhausen entitled to speak for an almost exclusively Roman Catholic region, his party colleague Louis Piérard was convinced the inhabitants of the region of Malmedy were ‘true Walloons’ and would therefore have to be interrogated separately.⁸⁶

The region’s administrative inclusion into the province of Liège caused the inhabitants of the German-speaking language zone to fear their right to education in German could no longer be guaranteed. Although Baltia’s special measures were abolished and the right to administer local primary schools and appoint teachers was, as a result, transferred to city councils, school inspectors could still use one of the exemption clauses in the 1914 educational law allowing them to change the language of education to the dominant language in the children’s social environment if they considered that language had changed. This is precisely what happened in the Walloon municipalities where German had ceased to be offered as the main language of instruction in the nineteenth century but had started to be taught in again after the First World War. In the mid-1920s, school inspectors recommended changing the language of instruction back to French.⁸⁷

It should be clear by now that inhabitants from the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy faced a power structure in which their opportunities for political decision-making were extremely limited. Borderland inhabitants opted for two power strategies in order to challenge these conditions. The first strategy was to try to change their status within the Belgian Kingdom through the ballot box, such as in the parliamentary elections of 1929. Borderland inhabitants founded their own political party, the Christian People’s Party (Christliche Volkspartei), which demanded a new consultation on self-determination. Together with the revisionist Belgian Workers’ Party (Parti Ouvrier Belge), who proposed a secret plebiscite, they received 75 per cent of the vote.⁸⁸

In these national elections, the Socialist Party’s *Compromis des Belges* did not bring it the success it had hoped for. The Catholic-Liberal coalition government led by the Catholic statesman Henri Jaspar, which had ruled the country since the end of 1927, returned to office but saw its Flemish nationalist wing strengthened.⁸⁹ The second power strategy lay in the hands of local city councils, which were eager to exploit their power in

decision-making over primary education. This power strategy will be elaborated upon further in this chapter.

Material Reality: Battles over Language Learning Regulations

We will now see how borderland inhabitants developed power strategies within the power structure in which they operated at the time in order to not only articulate their dissatisfaction, but also maximise the language learning opportunities for borderland pupils. Notwithstanding the fact that Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy displayed different systems of power, the carving out of the contours of primary education intensified in both borderlands in the second half of the 1920s. This phenomenon took the form of negotiations over language learning between state institutions at various levels of decision-making, on the one hand, and parents, teachers and children, on the other. An abundance of regulations was introduced to steer the language learning conditions of borderland pupils. In Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, there were similar attempts to reduce teaching in an unwanted language, either by closing down schools offering teaching in a specific language or by influencing when foreign language teaching needed to be introduced into the school curriculum. Given the prevalent assumption in Poland that one nation correlated with one language, more attention was paid to the former measure in Polish Upper Silesia, whereas in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, more importance was paid to the latter.

We will now discuss successively the interactions of human beings in the creation, implementation and alteration of regulations concerning the closure of specific primary schools, as well as the (foreign) language learning on offer in borderland primary schools. A deep analysis of the conflicts, division lines and how these changed will reveal how the borderlands became focus points of excessive power struggles, where interpretations of the inside and the outside could either be expressed, and possibly altered, or were prohibited from being articulated.⁹⁰ Despite the collective obsession with developing an abundance of rules for the language learning of borderland pupils in their primary schools, however, it proved impossible to prevent legal normativity from crumbling. As a result, both Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy became the places where the meaning of what was to be shaped as national space collapsed.⁹¹

Attempts to Close Primary Schools

Whereas there were 69 German-speaking schools in Polish Upper Silesia in 1923/24, by 1927 that number had risen to 100.⁹² By that time, it had become clear to the Volksbund and Silesian authorities that borderland children who did not speak German, or spoke it poorly, were applying to attend German-speaking schools. While the Volksbund explained this practice as resulting from the better quality of education on offer in German-speaking schools, Silesian authorities saw instead a violation of supranational law and decided to check the school applications of guardians of borderland pupils.⁹³ This provoked a battle over school applications that would last until Germany left the League of Nations in 1933. Some formulations in the Geneva Convention concerning the criteria children needed to fulfil to belong to a minority had been phrased rather imprecisely. In Article 106 it was written that minority schools were to be established if the guardians of forty children belonging to a linguistic minority supported their establishment, and in Article 131 that the language of a child was determined by the declaration of a guardian. The Convention explicitly stated that this declaration was not to be verified or disputed by authorities. Nor was the question whether a child belonged to a linguistic minority (covered in Article 74).⁹⁴ The Silesian authorities' decision to ask guardians to accompany their children's school applications with a formal declaration about the language of the child provoked the Mixed Commission to pronounce in favour of a subjective interpretation of what it meant to be a national minority, which nevertheless explicitly went beyond the dictates of the Geneva Convention: 'It would be a mistake in educational terms to teach children who do not understand the German language in a German school.'⁹⁵ Michał Grażyński was not willing to accept this outcome and asked the League of Nations to acknowledge that the language of a child mentioned in Article 131 referred to a child's mother tongue, not to the language used in school. His appeal provoked the decision of the League of Nations, in March 1927, to begin directly intervening in educational policy in Polish Upper Silesia. It decided to temporarily organise a language committee under the lead of a neutral pedagogue, testing the language knowledge of those children who Polish authorities considered did not know German well enough to benefit from receiving education in that language.⁹⁶ This decision went against the right of guardians to choose a school for their children and was motivated by the need to guarantee pedagogical quality in borderland primary schools.⁹⁷

This was the moment in time when the struggle began over the closure of the public German-speaking primary school in the village of Koszęcin in the Lubliniec district. Silesian authorities attempted to abolish the dis-

trict's last existing public German minority school in 1927. Based on the Geneva Convention, a public minority school could be closed if the number of pupils fell below forty for three full school years in a row.⁹⁸ Since the opening of the school in 1924, the guardians of more than forty pupils had applied each year to have their children attend the school, but the number of applications approved by Silesian authorities had always been lower. In 1927, teachers and parents became embroiled in a battle over the survival of the school's public status. A detailed description of that battle here serves to illustrate how language operated as the decisive marker for representatives of both the Polish and German nations. The battle shows how an ensemble of social relations at the time led to an obsessive search to define the language of borderland children, until the meaning of their search got lost amid the turmoil of the myriad control measures issued by supranational, national and regional institutions, as well as the impassioned protests of the participants themselves. It became apparent that language was as much of an imaginary construct as nations were.⁹⁹

Thirty children were allowed to attend the school in 1927, while guardians of an additional eighteen pupils saw their applications rejected. School representatives went to the Mixed Commission, which declared that eight applications had been rightly rejected by Silesian authorities, but that ten had been evaluated incorrectly. In three cases, the Mixed Commission demanded that Silesian authorities respect the documented consent of the absent family father mothers had provided.¹⁰⁰ The Mixed Commission cited here the Geneva Convention, which had stated that only fathers were legally responsible for their children's education and left mothers without the right to apply for a school for their children.¹⁰¹ Five other children, the Mixed Commission concluded, could join the school after they had passed the language exam the League of Nations had just decided to introduce.¹⁰² A Swiss pedagogue, Wilhelm Maurer, was to decide whether a child was capable of receiving education in German.¹⁰³ The five children of the Koszęcin school all passed that exam in 1927.¹⁰⁴

Polish and German nationalists quarrelled in particular over the applications of Jan and Gertruda Noczyńska, as a positive decision would allow the public German-speaking school of Koszęcin to stay open. The father of these siblings had applied to have his children taught in the minority school, but their mother had withdrawn that application without the knowledge of her husband. In the meantime, the husband had left without leaving a trace. Silesian authorities were of the opinion that her case resembled that of unmarried mothers. Silesian authorities had provided unmarried mothers with a tutor to decide the education of their children. These tutors were chosen without consulting the mothers and often enrolled the children in schools following the Polish-language cur-

riculum. The practice was put under scrutiny by the Mixed Commission, which concluded that unmarried mothers were entitled to apply to a minority school for their children independently.¹⁰⁵ According to Silesian authorities, the mother of the Noczyńska family had the authority to sign a resignation form for her children. The Volksbund, however, accused Silesian authorities of blackmailing her and took their grievance to the Mixed Commission.¹⁰⁶ The mother was called up and testified to the Mixed Commission that it was her own independent decision to withdraw the applications for her two children.¹⁰⁷ The Mixed Commission concluded that thirty-eight pupils were entitled to attend the Koszęcin school, as a result of which the school lost its public funding.

Teachers at the Koszęcin school asked the Mixed Commission to look at the cases of four pupils from the previous year. The pupils had started their education at the school while waiting for the decision of the Silesian authorities over their school applications. Their applications were eventually rejected and the children were denied the right to continue their education. However, the Mixed Commission stated these pupils should be allowed to finish the school year and then take a Maurer language test, which the four pupils did, and one passed.¹⁰⁸ How must it have felt for the three children to receive their test results? Their fathers had declared them to be German speakers and they had followed a year of instruction in a German-speaking school. But the Swiss pedagogue now told them they had not mastered German well enough to benefit from further education in that language and decided a Polish-speaking school met their language demands more accurately. Every failed exam had vast implications. The new verdict of the Mixed Commission declared that the successful child was to be included among the pupils entitled to attend the German minority school of Koszęcin, thereby increasing its number of pupils to thirty-nine, but not to forty. The school lost its public funding.¹⁰⁹

A year later, parents responsible for fifty-one children applied to the school and demanded that public funding be regained. Polish authorities required each parent to fill in a school application, as well as a formal declaration form about the language of the child. They later approved twenty-five of the fifty-one applications and justified their restrictive behaviour on the basis of the first invocation of the Permanent Court at The Hague, which had meant to offer a longer-term outcome for the temporary Maurer exams.¹¹⁰ Whereas German representatives explained that the guardian was to choose a school for his children (based on Articles 74, 106 and 131 of the Geneva Convention), their Polish counterparts argued that the right to attend a school should be based on the factual language knowledge of the child (based on Article 9 of the Minority Treaty, which appeared in the Geneva Convention as Article 69). The international court decided

that the right to start a school was ‘une question de fait et non de pure volonté’ (a matter of fact and not purely of desire) and that applications to German-speaking schools from now on needed to be accompanied by formal declarations stating the mother tongue of the child. Furthermore, Polish authorities were not allowed to question these declarations.¹¹¹ As a result of this decision, the number of children enrolling at German-speaking schools in Polish Upper Silesia fell by 36 per cent over the next four years.¹¹²

Parents of the twenty-six pupils who were not approved complained to the League of Nations that Silesian officials had questioned the language declarations. Silesian authorities must have felt they had a high chance of losing the case because they did not wait for a decision; they invited guardians responsible for the twenty-six children to repeat the application procedure and again collected formal language declarations for the children. Of these guardians, sixteen decided to renew the application for their children, and Silesian authorities later approved four of these.¹¹³ But twenty-nine pupils still weren’t enough. As a result, Silesian authorities refused to give the school its public status back. The other parents wrote to the League of Nations demanding a justification for the rejection of twenty-two out of fifty-one applications.¹¹⁴

The rejections offer us a different picture to the one Polish and German nationalists wanted to see. A majority of parents, thirteen to be precise, did not feel comfortable filling in the formal language declaration for their children.¹¹⁵ Among these were seven fathers who wanted to declare their children bilingual and, when they were not given that possibility, refused to fill in the form. When they were later informed their refusal had made their application invalid, they started litigation against the Polish state.¹¹⁶ Rather than raising the issue with administrative decision-making bodies, they preferred to demand criminal justice in court, which indicates how little they trusted local and regional authorities. Their striving for a recognition of bilingualism found a deaf ear not only among Polish judges, who sentenced four of these fathers to two weeks in prison, but also among German nationalists.¹¹⁷ A reporter of a leading German-language newspaper published in Polish Upper Silesia portrayed the fathers as martyrs of German education: ‘Koszęcín, the name of an idyllic town in the Lubliniec district, is currently the name on everybody’s lips. It is inseparably linked with the faith of German *Volkstum* abroad. The men of this town, who leave prison today, where they had to spend two full weeks inside because of the German education of their children, are martyrs of their conviction and their sense of justice.’¹¹⁸ Alongside the thirteen fathers who did not fill in the declaration form, nine fathers declared they did not know what the language of their child was. Although Silesian authorities initially invalidated all their applications, some children were eventually allowed to

attend the school. The most telling case is that of a father applying in 1928 for three of his children who had taken the Maurer language exams a year earlier, when the Swiss pedagogue had considered two of the three siblings to not know German well enough to attend the German-speaking school, while declaring the third child bilingual.¹¹⁹ Here is a clear example of how the elaborated system set up to define the language of a child could not prevent meaning from collapsing. The system of power set up for Polish Upper Silesia was based on Wilhelm Maurer's ultimate decision about the prevailing language of a child. And yet, even he could not come up with a solution. Between the three children taking the Maurer test and the Polish authorities invalidating the applications of their father, however, the legal framework had changed. The first invocation of the Permanent Court at The Hague had replaced language tests by formal language declarations, but the Mixed Commission later decided that the declarations of parents should be given priority over the former negative decisions of Maurer in the future. It was recognised, however, that this measure could not immediately be put into practice, because children were considered unable to learn enough German in the year between these two decisions.¹²⁰ In 1930, parents of the so-called Maurer children raised the case again at the Mixed Commission, and their children were allowed to attend German-speaking schools, a decision Silesian authorities appealed against at The Hague, but in vain.¹²¹ In the end, the siblings were therefore allowed to attend the German-speaking school in Koszęcin, but that school had by then lost its public funding.¹²²

Based on Article 8 of the Minority Treaty, the German-speaking school of Koszęcin was able to continue to operate as a private school.¹²³ In 1935, the German-speaking private school of Koszęcin was one of twenty-two German-speaking private primary schools and one of thirty-two private schools in Polish Upper Silesia. In that year, there were 684 primary schools in Upper Silesia, of which 608 were Polish-speaking (598 public and 10 private), and 76 were German-speaking (54 public and 22 private).¹²⁴

Notwithstanding the switch in state sovereignty, money remained primarily in the hands of German citizens.¹²⁵ The private school in Koszęcin was owned and run by Karl Gottfried zu Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen, a German prince and the biggest landowner of the district.¹²⁶ In a considerable part of the Lubliniec district, the prince offered practically the only source of employment. While many local inhabitants who had supported the Silesian Uprisings had fostered the dream of living in a new independent Polish state, a state without German *Lords*, by the time Michał Grażyński was in power, however, it became clear that the jobs left by state officials of the German Empire were being filled by members of the Polish nobility imported from outside the region, who were not interested in the social

advancement of the local inhabitants.¹²⁷ With the global crisis hitting the region's economy and unemployment numbers shooting up at an unforeseen speed, the prince could guarantee parents job security and private loans, and their children warm breakfasts and a free ride to school.¹²⁸ In Koszęcin and its surroundings, state institutions had found a strong competitive legitimisation of power in the form of the prestige and the money of the prince. The school also enjoyed financial support from the German state.¹²⁹ After German nationals had left the civil service in Polish Upper Silesia, German statesmen saw in local landowners the last strongholds of German culture.¹³⁰ Money turned out to be an effective tool to counterbalance Polish nationalist strategies.

It could be argued that the French-speaking school in Eupen was the equivalent of the German-speaking school in Koszęcin. There was also an interest here in closing the school so as to diminish the influence of its language on the direct social environment. But the system of power in which this decision was taken differed. As explained earlier, given the fact that political representation of the Belgian eastern borderlands in the Belgian parliament was almost non-existent and municipalities held decision-making power over primary education, the city council of Eupen could put itself on the political map with decisions such as the closure of the municipal French-speaking school in order to challenge the flexibility of the country's system of power.

The city council of Eupen decided to close the French-speaking school and move the children to a newly opened French-speaking branch within one of its German-speaking primary schools. With the aim of creating a monolingual German-speaking zone, it wanted to close the school launched by Herman Baltia for the children of immigrating Belgian civil servants. Four days before his defeat in the municipal elections of October 1926, Léon Xhaffaïré, who had been installed as mayor of Eupen by Herman Baltia before he left office, wrote to the Belgian minister responsible for education, out of anger at being overruled:

I believe, sir, that if the Belgian government wants to be soo [sic] correct that, if it respects the German language in everything, it also needs to respect the right of Walloon guardians to a French education for their children . . . Should these measures be carried out, it will soon be possible to say that the inhabitants of Eupen have incorporated the Belgians who came to live with them.¹³¹

In contrast to many other places in Belgium, French-speaking representatives did not hold a majority of the votes in the city council of Eupen. It was therefore possible to achieve in Eupen what was impossible in Dutch-speaking Flanders. Flemish nationalists applauded the decision in a leading newspaper: 'The liberated brothers of the beloved Eupen

taught the *franskiljons* a lesson.¹³² ‘Franskiljons’ functioned as a demeaning term for Flemish people favouring the usage of French in Belgium, but in this newspaper article the term referred to German-speaking Belgians privileging French. In the end, the closure was prevented by Camille Huysmans, the minister responsible for education, who argued that the school was the only operative French-speaking educational institute in the German-speaking zone. The overruling of a city council had previously been unheard of; the system of power in the Belgian Kingdom had reached the end of its flexibility.¹³³

At the same time, those guardians who, while identifying themselves as German speakers in Baltia’s language survey, wanted to send their children to the French-speaking school – in order to learn the dominant language of the Belgian nation – were also forbidden by the minister from realising their dreams.¹³⁴ Although these guardians had also been denied the right of free choice over the primary school for their children during the Baltia regime, after the dissolution of Eupen-Malmedy, at least one parent had nurtured the hope that his right to choose the education of his child would now be respected. In 1925, the city council in Eupen thwarted this hope. It demanded that the family move to the Roman Catholic parish to which the French-speaking school belonged.¹³⁵ It does not come as a surprise, then, that the city council was eager to support the minister in his prohibition one year later.¹³⁶ Whereas guardians all over Belgium had the right to choose a primary school for their children, either in Belgium or across Belgium’s state border lines, German-speaking guardians in Eupen were not entitled to send their children to the local French-speaking school.

Teaching a Foreign Language

Having dissected the battles over the closures of primary schools offering teaching in an unwanted language in the two case study borderlands, either in German in Polish Upper Silesia or in French in Eupen, we will now see how reducing teaching in an unwanted language could also be achieved by means of a second strategy: through foreign language training.

In 1926, the decision of Polish authorities to finally make use of a provision outlined in the Minority Treaty to require the state language to be taught in minority schools was also implemented in Polish Upper Silesia. It became the practice to offer pupils Polish from the third year in primary school onwards. This lasted until 1929, when the Polish Ministry of Education decided to postpone Polish language learning until the fifth year on the grounds that the children should have a good command of their

mother tongue first.¹³⁷ German minority organisations, in turn, asked Polish authorities in vain to begin teaching Polish earlier in German-speaking schools, arguing that German-speaking Polish citizens also needed to speak good Polish.¹³⁸

In a city like Eupen, by contrast, the dynamics in negotiations over foreign language learning were more complicated, as they referred to the detailed regulations and variety of practices in other places within Belgium at the time. By taking a stance on foreign language training, the city council of Eupen aimed to fight a battle about the kind of space it was to take within the Belgian Kingdom. The city council did not want to find itself in a similar situation to that of the schools in Brussels and municipalities on language borders because it had seen that the right to a German education had been reversed there in the first half of the 1920s. It therefore demanded the same status as Flanders, where language regulations had a permanent character. In 1926, it asked the Belgian minister responsible for education, the Flemish socialist Camille Huysmans, whether Baltia's special measure to start foreign language education in the first year remained in force after the region was integrated into the province of Liège. In a more detailed interpretation of Article 20 of the 1914 law, the minister adhered to the language regulations in Brussels and municipalities along language borders and suggested that a foreign language in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy could not be taught before the third year of primary school. All the schools were to erase it from their first- and second-year curricula. But the city council of Eupen decided to disregard the suggestion and to maximise the freedom provided by the Belgian municipality law. It voted to offer French in its German-speaking primary schools from the fifth year onwards for five hours a week, just as Dutch-speaking schools in Flanders did.¹³⁹ Nowhere else in Belgium did primary school teachers see the beginning of their second language training programmes change from the first to the fifth year in the course of only eight years.

Interestingly, the French-speaking school in Eupen also went against the ministerial suggestion.¹⁴⁰ The 1930–1931 school curriculum shows that pupils still had one hour of German conversation in their first year. The school started foreign language learning not only earlier than every other school in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, but also earlier than any other school in Belgium. Paradoxically enough, they kept in force a special measure that Baltia had introduced to make German speakers speak French, merely by introducing it in their school out of consistency.¹⁴¹

It is impossible to retrace the motivation behind this decision, as the school, including its archive, was set on fire during the German invasion in 1940.¹⁴² But if we compare its practice with what happened in

Polish Upper Silesia, its motives can be understood. Just as German minority organisations asked Polish authorities to start teaching children in German-speaking schools Polish earlier, because German-speaking Polish citizens also needed to speak good Polish, children in the French-speaking school were also to learn the prevailing language in their daily social environment, German, without endangering the dominant position of the French language. Such a supposition seems plausible and shows the school to be a forerunner of bilingualism in a country where other French-speaking schools had only occasionally started to offer Dutch on a voluntary basis from the fifth year. It is a more logical explanation than the improbable notion that a school set up for civil servants migrating to the border region decided to continue teaching in German from the first year (a consequence of Baltia's measure to nationalise borderland children by making them speak French) out of an indifferent stance towards the use of languages. Any argument, moreover, that a nation-state of the masses was to include children with different mother tongues in its ranks does not apply to this school, which was attended by the children of well-educated French-speaking parents.¹⁴³

Language Learning in Practice

The introduction of an abundance of regulations on the access of borderland pupils to schools within and beyond the borderlands, as well as the closure of certain schools, along with their (foreign) language learning, failed to comprehensively secure language learning conditions in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt-Vith and Malmedy. Whereas in Polish Upper Silesia, Silesian authorities chose the power strategy of forceful domination in order to force improved conditions for Polish language learning upon primary schools, in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, Belgian state representatives put their hopes in the preventive power strategies that had come to consolidate the Belgian Kingdom throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in order to integrate borderland schools into the Belgian school system.

Polish Upper Silesia

In Polish Upper Silesia, both Polish and German nationalists displayed their interest in, and concern over, the everyday school context in which the language learning of borderland pupils took place. A journalist who wrote for the Polish nationalist newspaper *Western Poland* (Polska Zachodnia) visiting a primary school teacher on the occasion of a school festival in

Pawełki, a small village in the Lubliniec district, was full of admiration for the difficult job the Polish teacher was undertaking:

Cracks, holes, and full of mud, into which the axles of our carriage sank. Surely such a godforsaken backwater dump, and such a road as the one leading to Pawełki, can only be found somewhere in the tundra of deepest Siberia. . . . Here in this isolated spot a few kilometres from the German border, a Polish song was pealing out like a battle cry announcing to the enemy that we are vigilant, that we *won't forsake the land we come from*.¹⁴⁴ I was chatting for a while with the children. I was surprised that they were so daring, resolute and assertive, and the older ones could speak Polish with the correct pronunciation. 'What is your name?' I asked one kid, maybe six years old, with a nice rosy face. 'Zelfik,' he responded resolutely. 'Tell me, Zelfik,' I asked him, 'what did you get from Santa Claus?' 'A horse,' he replied enthusiastically. 'Maybe it was a cow?' I joked. 'No, the cow calved at Christmas time,' he said in his dialect. What a good-hearted kid! I left the village thrilled by this pioneer of Polishness in this godforsaken dump, but there was nothing to envy him.¹⁴⁵

In fact, teachers in Polish-speaking branches themselves called bilingualism, which 'still greatly flourishes at home and in the environment of the pupil', the reason for a majority of the children's inability to read and write at the end of their primary school education.¹⁴⁶ The Polish-based members of the Regional Association of German Teachers (*Landesverband Deutscher Lehrer und Lehrerinnen*), which professed itself the bearer of German culture, also had their doubts. In their periodical, for example, they published an essay of a child of fourteen who had attended a Polish-speaking school in order to openly lament the fact that the girl wrote German while using Polish orthography.¹⁴⁷

Provincial governor Michał Grażyński increased measures to gain more control over the language learning conditions of borderland pupils but met with resistance on all fronts. Soon, he faced battles over religion, teachers and textbooks. Religious space became the primary bone of contention between state officials and clergymen. In 1930, for example, local priests in the city of Lubliniec allowed the school inspectorate to inspect the school but refused entrance to the church where religious classes, often held in Silesian or in a mixture of German and Polish, were taught.¹⁴⁸ In 1931, on the other hand, a Polish priest in Koszęcin did not want to celebrate the first communion of children attending the private German-speaking minority school, even though these children were Roman Catholic.¹⁴⁹ Grażyński continued to prefer immigrating Polish teachers over local talent, but the Silesian Parliament was able to reduce that influx by voting in favour of requiring immigrating female teachers to leave the profession upon their marriage.¹⁵⁰

Grażyński also ordered new textbooks for his Polonisation campaign. The most well-known reading book for pupils in Polish Upper Silesia, *Our*

Readings (*Nasze Czytanki*), was compiled by Jan Żebrok, a teacher from former Galicia. The book was used in Polish and German teaching curricula, with the children in the latter having to read selective parts.¹⁵¹ This textbook was not a significant contribution to Zygmunt Mysłakowski's inclusive pedagogy of different cultures. Although the language was to be 'beautiful, but accessible and understandable, especially for youth living in Upper Silesia', Silesian was not to play more than an auxiliary role in order to enable pupils to learn proper Polish.¹⁵² Set out in the old-fashioned Galician pedagogical tradition, the book resembled an encyclopaedia, with texts from local newspapers, legends, Upper Silesian authors, and Polish literature classified from easy to more difficult.¹⁵³

In his self-composed story 'The Joy of School', Żebrok wrote from the perspective of a pupil:

In front of me sits Władek, whose father is an engineer. How beautifully he speaks Polish! Every once in a while, he says 'Of course!', 'Indeed!' or 'Yes, sir!'. You know, Dad, I really like it when somebody speaks Polish so beautifully. But I am also learning, because my teacher also speaks beautifully. And when I grow up, I will also be an engineer or an army officer. 'Why not?' said my father. 'You can be who you want to be, but you'll have to study hard! Thank

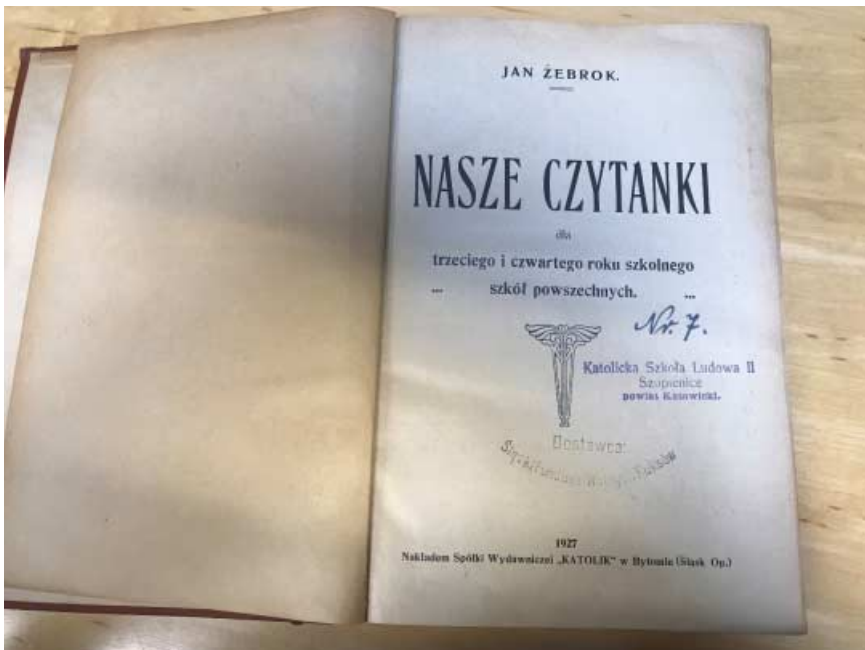


FIGURE 4.1. New textbooks, such as *Our Readings* (*Nasze Czytanki*) compiled by Jan Żebrok, were the most well-known products of the Polonisation campaign directed towards borderland pupils in Polish Upper Silesia in the late 1920s and early 1930s (copyright: The Silesian Library).

god we now have Polish schools, so the son of a blue-collar worker can become somebody better.¹⁵⁴

The textbooks of Grażyński's Polonisation campaign were highly unpopular. As parents were responsible for buying school textbooks, which many in times of economic hardship were unable to do, and with public financial support remaining limited, the distribution of these textbooks was limited.¹⁵⁵ When the teacher of a class preparing pupils for vocational school in Lubliniec (all aged between sixteen and eighteen) asked them to buy another textbook, *Polish Readings, part 1*, most only bought the book after the municipality administration made their parents pay fines of up to 3 PLN.¹⁵⁶ An unemployed father complained that the alphabet book he had bought for his son did not mention God: 'it is like writing a book without a dot on the letter i'.¹⁵⁷ Until 1932, most of the primary school textbooks in use in Polish Upper Silesia had been first published before 1918.¹⁵⁸

The Regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy

German nationalists also expressed their indignation that many of the primary teachers in the regions of Eupen and Sankt Vith had not mastered the German language well enough. This led to situations in which, for example, 'the children starting the third year know their mother tongue worse than they knew it in the first year'.¹⁵⁹ In the local press, it was reported that pupils laughed when they noticed their school inspector had not mastered German, and lamented: 'The form and face of the school are so often the face of a nation. As the school goes, so goes the country.'¹⁶⁰

In their approach towards the language learning of borderland pupils, Belgian politicians tended to endorse a continuation of the preventive power strategy and left the responsibility for education to the Catholic Church.¹⁶¹ The councils of Catholic-dominated individual municipalities within the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were given the task of recruiting locally acceptable teachers, a strategy that eventually succeeded and led to the steady disappearance from newspapers of voices protesting against the quality of teaching.¹⁶² In addition, because the regions of Eupen, Sankt-Vith and Malmedy were mostly composed of traditional families, with a male breadwinner and a stay-at-home mother who looked after the children, in contrast to Polish Upper Silesia, there was little to debate.

We will end this chapter with the alphabet book we began this book with: Joseph Lousberg's *Fibel*, published in 1929.¹⁶³ The book was commissioned by the city council of Eupen following the decision of the Belgian minister responsible for education to forbid the import of textbooks from

Germany, owing to his belief that German historical narratives could endanger the upbringing of borderland pupils and that a majority of these books were not in accordance with the Belgian school curriculum. As is the case with Żebrok's reading book composed for borderland pupils in Polish Upper Silesia, Lousberg's book is not a culturally innovative creation. Instead, it is an eclectic mixture of elements from former Prussian textbooks, such as the Gothic alphabet and children's illustrations, as well as a Belgian letter-reading method of teaching the Latin alphabet. Far from comprehensive, the book did not make use of the best of the different teaching methods available. The anonymous pedagogue from the Rhineland, for example, called the book a missed opportunity to educate children through the method of art education (*Kunsterziehung*), which had flourished during the late years of the German Empire, because the images were not associated with the letters children were to learn.¹⁶⁴ The secretary general of the Christian People's Party in Eupen, Stephan Gierets, in turn remarked: 'Instead of introducing a German alphabet book here, [Lousberg] twisted the German alphabet book so much that everything is a mess and teachers can no longer do anything reasonable with it.'¹⁶⁵

Conclusion

This chapter concentrated on language learning in primary schools in the two case study borderlands in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Language learning played a pivotal role in the process of recurring order in the borderlands following changes to the state border line. This scaping of the border was analysed by means of key concepts from the framework of comparison presented in the second chapter. Through a reconstruction of systems of power in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, with the help of the second (power and multiple loyalties) and third (micro history within a multilayered context) axes of comparison, we came to see how different the fragmented countries Poland and Belgium were at the time. Whereas in the new Polish state, power manifested itself through domination in an extra-legal constitutional regime, in the old Belgian Kingdom, it took the shape of well-known preventive measures to ensure social stability in times of political volatility. These systems of power worked out differently in the two borderlands. Whereas in Polish Upper Silesia, in times of economic hardship, Polish state representatives were capable of reducing but not erasing the loyalty of inhabitants to a German former prince, in the regions of Eupen and Sankt Vith, the political retrocession scandal taught inhabitants to remain sceptical towards the Belgian state.

The scaping of the border in primary schools through practices and discourses impregnated with power initially aimed to reduce the influence of an unwanted language within each of the two case study borderlands. Both borderlands, in addition, functioned as the physical spaces where debates were held or control measures were installed that generated an impact far beyond their geographical area. The concept of human territoriality (included in the first axis of comparison) enabled us to see how institutions, teachers and parents in both Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt-Vith and Malmedy steered discussions towards the contradictions within language learning policies in order to not only test but also bend the limits of a certain system of power. In both borderlands, the circulation of division within the system of power that obtained at the time in interwar Europe took a similar path.

The following similarities of borderland schooling were revealed during an analysis of language learning conditions and practices in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy in the 1920s and the early 1930s. First, the systems of power applicable to Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were more dependent on geopolitical and internal political changes than elsewhere in Poland and Belgium. In the mid-1920s, the systems of power applicable to Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy changed under the influence of changes in international cooperation and politics at a national level. Owing to the Locarno Agreements, Belgian state representatives needed to respect the stability of the German western border and could not sell the regions of Eupen and Sankt Vith to Germany. At the same time, the capability of the international order to protect Polish sovereignty in Polish Upper Silesia weakened.

Second, both Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy became the physical places where discussions were held over language learning that proved crucial for much wider social networks within Poland, Germany, Belgium and the League of Nations. It was in these border regions that an ensemble of human relations interacting with the material and immaterial reality of language learning combined to achieve the 'greatest possible autonomy', as Claude Raffestin described in his multi-perspective programme on human territoriality.¹⁶⁶

Borderland inhabitants were also eager to point out inconsistencies and contradictions within the system of power applicable to them because their positions turned out to be more negotiable than elsewhere in the country. In both borderlands, this resulted in a collective obsession to improve existing or introduce additional legal rules. As a consequence, borderland pupils experienced much more control than pupils growing up elsewhere. These control measures could not, however, prevent borderland schools

from experiencing the excesses of systems that defined a nation through its language. This was the case in Poland, Germany, and even Belgium, where French remained privileged over Dutch and German in language regulations for primary education.

The independent Swiss pedagogue Wilhelm Maurer was made responsible for indicating the prevailing language of Silesian children, but even he ended up defining children as being bilingual. Moreover, the French-speaking school in the German-speaking zone of former Eupen-Malmedy provided German language lessons from the first year onwards (the only school in Belgium to do so), despite an existing regulation opposing this practice. These are examples of how the outcome of the spiralling division of power was not a stable solution but a collapse of meaning. The kinds of solutions on offer differed. Whereas in Poland, authorities increased measures of control over language learning and fuelled battles over governance, in Belgium, local teachers were relied upon to combine traditionalism with pedagogical expertise in order to reduce tensions. In Germany, out of fear that the German nation would lose what it perceived as its children, science was used to pathologise bilingualism and to dismiss as inferior the German language teaching on offer in borderlands. Chapter five will show how systems of power changed when the League of Nations ceased to play a decisive role in Silesian school politics, how Polish and Belgian authorities took pains to bring new pedagogical methods to the borderlands, and how more attention was paid to the role of teachers in pupils' language learning.

Notes

1. Bjork, 'Monoglot Norms', 127.
2. Borodziej, *Geschichte Polens*, 133.
3. Murphy, 'Entente Territorial', 169.
4. Raffestin, 'Space', 121.
5. *Ibid.*, 123.
6. *Ibid.*, 183; Teubner, 'Fragmented', 327–41.
7. Linek, *Kulturelle Eliten*.
8. Brambilla, 'Critical Potential', 23.
9. Feyissa and Hoehne, *Borders*.
10. Dell'Agnes and Amilhat Szary, 'Introduction', 10.
11. Pawley, *Watch on the Rhine*.
12. Wandycz, *Twilight*, 19.
13. Fink, *Defending*, 295; Kolb, *Weimarer*, 195.
14. Mazower, 'Minorities', 51; Maxelon, *Stresemann*, 297.

15. The average GDP per capita in Germany was 3,331 USD in 1922 and 4,051 USD in 1929. The average GDP per capita in Poland was 1,382 USD in 1922 and 1,994 USD in 1929 (Broadberry and O'Rourke, *Cambridge Economic History*, vol. 2, 190).
16. Slay, *Polish Economy*, 16.
17. Borodziej, *Geschichte Polens*, 169.
18. Novikov, *Shades*, 206.
19. Slay, *Polish Economy*, 17.
20. Borodziej, *Geschichte Polens*, 177.
21. Greiner, 'Historia gospodarcza', 309ff.
22. In March 1926, for example, 21.34 per cent of the children attending the Polish teaching branch were reported absent, whereas only 6.3 per cent of the pupils in the German teaching branch were. In June 1926, however, around 6 per cent were reported absent within both teaching branches (ASPL, School Chronicle, Wykaz stanu szkoły powszechnej, Lubliniec, September 1926); APK, 1376/1269, 252 (Wykaz uczniów, który bez słusznego powodu lub bez usprawiedliwienia opuścili naukę szkolną w listopadzie 1926 r., Lubliniec, November 1926). See also *ibid.*, 430 (Odpis obowiązujących rozporządzeń w Województwie Śląskim w przedmiocie kar za opuszczenie nauki szkolnej, Lubliniec 29 October 1929); *ibid.*, 31 (Wykaz uczniów, którzy bez słusznego powodu lub bez usprawiedliwienia opuścili naukę szkolną w październiku r.b., Lubliniec, October 1926); *ibid.*, 366ff. (Lista kar za zaniedbywanie nauki szkolnej, Lubliniec, November 1928).
23. Regorowicz, 'Rozwój szkolnictwa', 64; Fałęcki, *Niemieckie szkolnictwo mniejszościowe*, 47–53; Górski, 'Organizacja', 184, 189. ASPL, School Chronicle (Statystyka według stanu z dnia 1 November 1926, Lubliniec, 25 November 1926).
24. Regorowicz, 'Rozwój szkolnictwa', 93ff.
25. APK, 1376/1186, 39 (Do Województwa Śląskiego przez pana radcę szkolnego Świerczka w miejscu, undated); APK, 1363/707, 3 (Protokół z posiedzenia Komitetu Gwiazdkowego gminy Kalety, Kalety, 18 December 1936).
26. Wanatowicz, 'Aktywność', 143; Eser speaks of 1,500 German marks of humanitarian aid for children in Polish Upper Silesia in 1926 and 77,700 Polish złoty in 1935 (Eser, 'Volk, Staat, Gott!', 385).
27. Raitz von Frentz, *A Lesson Forgotten*, 142–44.
28. *Ibid.*, 344.
29. Eser, 'Volk, Staat, Gott!', 385.
30. Quoted from APK, Insp. Szk. Kat., 177, Protokoły z. . . 17 January and 11 April 1929, 97–98, in Glimos-Nadgórska, *Polskie szkolnictwo*, 92.
31. APK, 1376/1269, 430 (Odpis obowiązujących rozporządzeń w Województwie Śląskim w przedmiocie kar za opuszczenie nauki szkolnej, Lubliniec, 29 October 1929).
32. APK, 1376/1269, 524 (Wyrok zaoczny w sprawie Anny Rataj, Lubliniec, 28 January 1931).
33. Ulfik, 'Rodowód', 32.
34. 'Rolnik Spl. Akcji w Lublińcu szuka ucznia biurowego', *Tygodnik Powiatowy na powiat lubliniecki*, 4, 28 January 1933, 146.
35. 'Zwei elfjährige Mädchen', *Kattowitzer Zeitung*, vol. 65, 144, 26 June 1933, 7.
36. Kopeć, 'My i oni', 17.
37. Wanatowicz, *Inteligencja na Śląsku*, 8 and 16.
38. Janik, 'Zespół Szkół', 10.
39. Grathwol, 'Germany', 221–24.
40. Lejeune, *Die Säuberung*, 28; O'Connell, 'Left to Their Own Devices', 18ff; Enssle, *Stresemann's Territorial Revisionism*.

41. Belgium and France had signed an agreement in 1920 that they would take up arms for each other in the event of a German invasion (Gerard, 'De democratie gedroomd', 946), but when Great Britain committed to provide military support, Belgium pushed its bi-lateral agreement with France into the background (Grathwol, 'Germany', 249; Bariety, 'La France', 61).
42. O'Connell, *Annexation*, 284.
43. Pabst, 'Eupen-Malmedy', 453.
44. Gerard, 'De democratie gedroomd', 952 and 1038–40.
45. The average GDP per capita in Belgium was 4,413 USD in 1922 and 5,054 USD in 1929. The average GDP per capita in Germany was 3,331 USD in 1922 and 4,051 USD in 1929 (Broadberry and O'Rourke, *Cambridge Economic History*, vol. 2, 190).
46. Gerard, 'De democratie gedroomd', 959.
47. *Ibid.*, 1044.
48. O'Connell, 'Left to Their Own Devices', 34.
49. Quadflieg, 'Elitenkontinuität', 113.
50. Klefisch, *Dritte Reich*, 119.
51. The figure is for the working year of 1928/29 (Lejeune, *Die Deutsch-Belgischen Kulturbeziehungen*, 126). One German mark in 1929 was worth 3.6 EUR in 2008 (*Deutsche Währungsgeschichte*).
52. Lejeune, *Die Deutsch-Belgischen Kulturbeziehungen*, 125.
53. SE, 661/55/168 (Auszug aus den Verhandlungen des Schöffengerichtes vom 7 July 1931, Eupen, 9 July 1931).
54. As will be shown in the section entitled 'Attempts to close primary schools' in this chapter, an exception was made for the French-speaking school in Eupen.
55. van Banning, *Gebiedsovergang*, 75.
56. See, for example, Gertrud Comès-Heinen, born in 1918 in Holzheim (Förderverein des Archivwesens in der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft Belgiens (Eupen), *In Stellung*, 35).
57. See, for example, 'Junge gesucht, der Melken kann', *Sankt Vithers Volkszeitung*, 6 June 1934, 4; 'fleißiges Mädchen oder Jungen die melken können gesucht', *Sankt Vithers Volkszeitung*, 21 April 1934, 10.
58. SE, X/168-8, 7, 3–4 (Rapport sur le Collège Patronné d'Eupen, Eupen, January 1936).
59. SE, E/2/8 VS II 91 30, 5 (Das College vom konfessionellen Standpunkt betrachten im Vergleich mit einem Athenäum); BABL, 1051, 36, unpaginated (Von den Schulen Eupens, 1927, 3).
60. O'Connell, *Annexation*, 290.
61. DuVal, *Borderlands*, 3.
62. Raffestin, 'Space', 123.
63. Borodziej, *Geschichte Polens*, 124ff.
64. Suleja, 'Józef Piłsudski', 190.
65. Quote in Borodziej, *Geschichte Polens*, 164; See also Chernov, 'Joseph Piłsudski', 146–55.
66. Jakubiak, *Wychowanie*, 44–45; Sośnicki, *Podstawy*, 255–56.
67. Kojkoł, *Polska*, 32.
68. *Ibid.*, 37.
69. Rowid, 'Szkoly pracy'; Parkhurst, *Education on the Dalton Plan*.
70. Sobczak, *Nowe wychowanie*, 68; Rowid, *Szkola twórcza*; Majewiczówna, 'Konferencja', 215.
71. Kojkoł, *Polska*, 139 and 142.
72. Decroly and Boon, *Vers l'école rénovée*; Sobczak, *Nowe wychowanie*, 47.
73. Polak-Springer, *Recovered*, 41.
74. Müller and Struve, 'Einleitung', 35.

75. Jędrzejczak, 'Recepcja', 452.
76. Ibid., 41; Kaczmarek, 'Zwischen Regionalismus', 175.
77. The party Wojciech Korfanty belonged to was called the Christian-National Labour Party (Chrześcijańsko-Narodowe Stronnictwo Pracy) before 1925, and the Polish Christian Democratic Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Chrześcijańskiej Demokracji) afterwards (BABL, 1529, fol. 307r (Gesamtbeurteilung, Katowice, 18 March 1939)); Polak-Springer, *Recovered*, 29. The party always received more votes than the representatives of Sanacja ideology led by Michał Grażyński (Wanatowicz, 'Województwo śląskie', 245). German political parties in Polish Upper Silesia, on the other hand, garnered 42 per cent of the vote in the 1926 municipal elections, and 18.4 per cent in the 1930 elections for the Silesian parliament, when Korfanty's party was heavily supported by German speakers. 18.4 per cent was still more than the number of German-minded local inhabitants (then estimated to constitute approximately one-seventh of the population), and has been interpreted as a sign of acclimatisation to Polish rule (Ther, 'Schlesisch', 183).
78. *Kattowitzer Zeitung*, 15 April 1926 and 18 March 1927; Chojnowski, *Koncepcje*, 113.
79. Brüll, 'Entre méfiance et intégration', 135–66; Gerard, 'De democratie gedroomd', 1023.
80. Gerard, 'De democratie gedroomd', 980 and 985.
81. Ibid., 1021–23.
82. Pabst, 'Eupen-Malmedy', 322.
83. O'Connell, *Annexation*, 223.
84. Pabst, 'Eupen-Malmedy', 331; Lejeune, *Die Säuberung*, 29. Women in Belgium received the right to vote in 1948.
85. Brüll, 'Dazwischen-sein', 66.
86. Wary, *Belgiens wiedergefundene Brüder*, 160–256.
87. Wenselaers, *De laatste Belgen*, 76.
88. Lentz, *Wahlverhalten*, 333.
89. Wils, *Vlaanderen*, 380.
90. Mezzadra and Neilson, *Border as Method*, 183; Mohanty, *Feminism*, 2.
91. Price, *Dry Place*, 118; Teubner, 'Fragmented', 327–41.
92. Fałęcki, *Niemieckie szkolnictwo mniejszościowe*, 96; Tomiak, 'Education', 200.
93. Kneip, *Die deutsche Sprache*, 93.
94. Junckerstorff, *Schulrecht*, 59 and 96.
95. In Polish 'pisemne oświadczenia o języka dzieci'; in German 'Förmliche Erklärung über die Sprache des Kindes' (Gemischte Kommission für Oberschlesien, *Amtliche Sammlung*, vol. 2, 412–15; Fałęcki, *Niemieckie szkolnictwo mniejszościowe*, 71). See also 'Stellungnahme des Präsidenten der Gemischten Kommission vom 15. Dezember 1926', printed in Junckerstorff, *Schulrecht*, 101–2.
96. 'Die Resolution des Völkerbundsrats vom 12. März 1927', in Junckerstorff, *Schulrecht*, 104–6.
97. Kneip, *Die deutsche Sprache*, 95–96.
98. Geneva Convention, Article 106 (Kaeckenbeeck, 'Convention', 622).
99. Kamusella, *Isomorphism*, 79 and 89.
100. Gemischte Kommission für Oberschlesien, *Amtliche Sammlung*, vol. 3, 110.
101. Novikov, *Shades*, 101.
102. Eser, 'Volk, Staat, Gott!', 423–25.
103. Schot, *Nation oder Staat?*, 190.
104. APK, 27/304, 75 (Wydział Oświecenia Publicznego, dotyczy szkoły mniejszościowej w Koszęcinie, Katowice, 20 October 1927).
105. Novikov, *Shades*, 101–2.

106. Both Polish and German nationalists went from door to door when fathers were out at work in order to convince mothers to send their children to schools following their respective teaching programmes (Ręgorowicz, *Wspomnienia*, 91).
107. APK, 27/304, 115 (Deutscher Volksbund für Polnisch Schlesien in der Beschwerdesache Nr. 326 betreffend Auflösung der Minderheitsschule in Koszęcin, Katowice, 2 May 1928).
108. APK, 27/304, 87 (Deutscher Volksbund für Polnisch Schlesien in der Beschwerdesache Nr. 326 betreffend Auflösung der Minderheitsschule in Koszęcin, Katowice, 11 February 1928).
109. Gemischte Kommission für Oberschlesien, *Amtliche Sammlung*, vol. 2, 108 and 112.
110. APK, 27/304, 127 (Śląski Urząd Wojewódzki do Wydziału Prezydyjnego, Dotyczy: szkoły mniejszościowej w Koszęcinie, Katowice, 1 May 1929, 1); APK, 27/304, 166–67 (Wojewoda Śląski do Ministerstwa Spraw zagranicznych, Departament Polityczny w Warszawie, 7 May 1929, 7–8).
111. Schot, *Nation oder Staat?*, 196–97; Hudson, *World Court Reports*, vol. 2, 268–319.
112. Whereas in 1928, 2,964 children were enrolled for teaching in German-speaking schools in Upper Silesia, in 1932, the number had fallen to 1,913 (Ręgorowicz, *Wykonanie*, 41).
113. APK, 27/304, 152 (Société des Nations, Cinquante-troisième Session du Conseil, Procès Verbal, Tenue à Lugano, le samedi 15 décembre 1928, 9); *ibid.*, 130 (Śląski Urząd Wojewódzki do Wydziału Prezydyjnego, Dotyczy: szkoły mniejszościowej w Koszęcinie, Katowice, 1 May 1929, 4).
114. *Ibid.*, 139 (Deutscher Volksbund für Polnisch-Schlesien betr. Errichtung der Minderheitsschule in Koschecin, Kreis Lubliniec, Katowice, 22 March 1929, 3); *ibid.*, 174 (Petycja Niemieckiego Związku Ludowego w sprawie nieotwarcia szkoły mniejszościowej w Koszęcinie, Genewa, 25 September 1929); PAAAB, R 82322, fol. 964v (Oberschlesischer Grenzbericht für die Monate Juli, August und September 1929, 15).
115. APK, 27/304, 127 (Śląski Urząd Wojewódzki do Wydziału Prezydyjnego, Dotyczy: szkoły mniejszościowej w Koszęcinie, Katowice, 1 May 1929, 1).
116. *Ibid.*, 166 (Wojewoda Śląski do Ministerstwa Spraw zagranicznych, Departament Polityczny w Warszawie, 7 May 1929, 7); *ibid.*, 205 ('Draußen in Koschentin!', *Kattowitzer Zeitung*, 60, 13 March 1930).
117. PAAAB, R 82322, fol. 119v–20r (Oberschlesischer Grenzbericht für die Monate Januar, Februar und März 1930, 10–11).
118. APK, 27/304, 207 ('Draußen in Koschentin!', *Kattowitzer Zeitung*, 60, 13 March 1930).
119. *Ibid.*, 128 (Śląski Urząd Wojewódzki do Wydziału Prezydyjnego, Dotyczy: szkoły mniejszościowej w Koszęcinie, Katowice, 1 May 1929).
120. Gemischte Kommission für Oberschlesien, *Amtliche Sammlung*, vol. 2, 156–71.
121. Fałęcki, *Niemieckie szkolnictwo mniejszościowe*, 82ff.; Hudson, *World Court Reports*, vol. 2, 703.
122. Gemischte Kommission für Oberschlesien, *Amtliche Sammlung*, vol. 3, 250.
123. APK, 27/304, 42 ('Der Oberschlesisches Kurier', *Neue Klage der Salonder*, 57, 9 February 1928); Raitz von Frentz, *A Lesson Forgotten*, 265.
124. APK, 1363/406, 2 (Wykaz szkół inspektoratów szkolnych w Województwie Śląskiem, 1936).
125. As late as 1937, the 6.7 per cent German citizens inhabiting Polish Upper Silesia possessed 50 per cent of its financial capital (APK, 1363/413, 8 [Znaczenie wpisów wobec wygaszania Konwencji Genewskiej i sposoby ich przeprowadzania, 1937]).
126. APK, 1363/1, unpaginated (Mapa powiatu lublinieckiego).
127. Kopeć, *'My i oni'*, 29 and 33.

128. The number of people unemployed in 1929 was 802, and in 1931 1,270 (see *Tygodnik Powiatowy na powiat lubliniecki*, 15, 13 April 1929; *ibid.*, 1, 3 January 1931). APK, 1363/413, 7 (Protokół z posiedzenia z dnia 15 April 1935. W sprawie akcji wpisów do szkół powszechnych); Raitz von Frentz, *A Lesson Forgotten*, 229.
129. Eser, 'Volk, Staat, Gott!', 161; Cygański, *Z dziejów Volksbundu*, 20ff.; Brey, 'Das deutsche höhere Schulwesen', 303.
130. Krekeler, *Revisionsanspruch*, 66.
131. PAAAB, R 76475, unpagged (*De afschaffing der Fransche Gemeenteschool te Eupen*, 'De Standaard', 6 October 1926). After the municipal elections on 10 October 1926, the city council of Eupen proposed Léon Trouet as a mayor, but the Belgian government did not want to approve that choice because he had played a leading role in the establishment of the pro-German association Heimatbund earlier that year. In 1927, the city remained officially without a mayor, before the Belgian government voted through a resolution in April 1928 that enabled the opinion of the city council to be bypassed, and directly appoint Hugo Zimmermann as the new mayor. He would remain in power until 1958 (Kontny, 'Bevormundung', 132–33).
132. *Ibid.*, PAAAB.
133. Minke, 'Schule und Unterricht', 222–24.
134. Fittbogen, *Schulrecht*, 111.
135. See, for example SE, 647/55/88 (Bürgermeister an Herrn Nikolas Claessen, 26 October 1925).
136. Nachlass Benker 23/75-76: Brief St. Gierets an Herrn Stadtbüroinspektor Benker, 3 February 1930.
137. Madajczyk, 'Dokumenty', 143; 'Gegen die Verkürzung des Polnisch-Unterrichts in unseren Volksschulen' (Against the Reduction of Polish Language Classes in our Primary Schools), *Schlesische Zeitung*, vol. 5, 6, 1929, 30.
138. Fałęcki, *Niemieckie szkolnictwo mniejszościowe*, 57; Eser, 'Volk, Staat, Gott!', 555.
139. Minke, 'Schule und Unterricht', 222.
140. SE, 651/55/113, unpagged (Protocol of the Permanent Deputation of the Province of Liège, no. 6169, 76–77 'Elementar- und Mittelschulunterrichtswesen, Sprachenregime', 7 November 1932).
141. 'Was die Heimatpresse schreibt?', *Echo der Gegenwart*, 1931, vol. 5, 12, 151.
142. Massenaux, 'Blick auf das Schulwesen', 32.
143. Nachlass Benker 23/75-76: Brief St. Gierets an Herrn Stadtbüroinspektor Benker, 3 February 1930.
144. This is a phrase from the poem 'Oath' (Rota) written by the Polish poet and activist Maria Konopnicka in Cieszyn Silesia in 1908. The poem, calling for independence, was a celebratory anthem widely known at the time.
145. 'Twórcza praca nauczyciela na ciężkiej placówce', *Polska Zachodnia*, [L. Sz.], 5, 5 January 1928, 4.
146. Glimos-Nadgórska, *Polskie szkolnictwo*, 89 and 108.
147. 'Schatten über der Schule. Der Aufsatz eines 14 jährigen Mädchen, das bisher die polnische Schule besuchen musste', *Deutsche Schulzeitung*, 1930–1931, 11, 119.
148. Dziwoki, *Kościół katolicki*, 250.
149. Loben-Guttentager Kreisblatt, Picture 'Kommunionkinder der deutschen Minderheitschule in Koschentin', vol. 6, 4, 16 March 1961, 3; Arbeitsgemeinschaft Lublinitzer Bürger, *Lublinitz*, 8; Ulfik, 'Dzieje Koszęcina', 276–80.
150. In 1935, immigrating teachers still accounted for 74.5 per cent of the teaching force in Polish Upper Silesia (Wanatowicz, *Ludność napływowa*, 60–61 and 71–72). See also Glimos-Nadgórska, *Polskie szkolnictwo*, 164 and 184.

151. Novikov, *Shades*, 91.
152. Jan Żebrok, quoted in Glimos-Nadgórska, 'Naszyc czytane', 122. See also Glimos-Nadgórska, *Polskie szkolnictwo*, 21.
153. Glimos-Nadgórska, 'Naszyc czytane', 118–19.
154. Żebrok, *Nasze czytanki*, 3–4.
155. AAK, AI 1031 (Sprawozdania wizytacyjne z roku szkolnego 1925, 1).
156. Polish title: *Czytania Polskie*, vol. 1 (1st edition, 1922), see Madeja, *Elementarze*, 157; APK, 1376/1269, 118 (Miejski Urząd Policyjny Lubliniec, Mandat karny, 1926).
157. *Gość Niedzielny*, 1936, 47, 657.
158. Wojtas, 'Learning to Become Polish', 203.
159. BABL, 1051, 36, unpaginated (Von den Schulen Eupens, 1927, 1).
160. *Eupener Nachrichten*, 30 September 1927, 1.
161. Warny, *Belgiens wiedergefundene Brüder*, 235.
162. Fittbogen, *Schulrecht*, 32–33.
163. SE, 657/55/147, unpaginated (Hauptschulinspektor über Fibel von Herrn Inspektor Lousberg, 1930 or 1931).
164. SE, 657/55/147, unpaginated (Urteil eines hervorragenden rheinischen Methodikers über die Fibel des belgischen Schulinspektors Lousberg, 1930 or 1931); see also the *Kunsterziehungsbewegung* of Alfred Lichtwark (Berg and Herrmann, 'Einleitung', 23).
165. Nachlass Benker 23/75-76: Brief St. Gierets an Herrn Stadtbüroinspektor Benker, 3 February 1930.
166. Raffestin, 'Space', 121.

A UNIVERSAL CHILDHOOD



A universal childhood refers to the conviction that all children should enjoy an equitable childhood experience irrespective of their social background. However, concrete ideas on what a universal childhood should look like are numerous and varied. Articulating the norms and values according to which children are to be brought up, these ideas are impregnated in supranational, transnational, national and regional contexts, causing the notion of universal childhood to acquire a different understanding in different systems of power, and causing conflicts over interpretations and implementations. This chapter compares how various ideas on universal childhood articulated at supranational, national and local levels interplayed in the policies towards, and experiences of, borderland pupils in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy at a moment in time when a majority of Polish and Belgian policymakers finally supported the idea that a universal childhood in the field of education meant something more than issuing a law on compulsory attendance. Did language learning enable borderland pupils to become more equal to pupils receiving their education elsewhere in Poland or Belgium?

Universal childhood in the interwar years is usually associated with the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, a document published by the International Save the Children Union (*l'Union Internationale de Secours aux Enfants*), and adopted by the League of Nations in 1924, which gathered initiatives with the aim of protecting children in need in different countries of Europe after the First World War. This declaration emphasised protection and welfare, stipulating that 'the child that is sick must be nursed', and 'the child must be the first to receive relief in times of distress'.¹ Other sentences went beyond the typical bounds of a charitable organisation, although they remained needs-based: 'The child must be given the means requisite for its normal development, both materially and spiritually', and 'The child must be brought up in the consciousness that

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its talents must be devoted to the service of its fellow men.' Even at the time, the declaration was heavily criticised for its limited scope. For example, Janusz Korczak, the famous doctor, pedagogue, writer and director of a Jewish orphanage in Warsaw, deemed it 'only an appeal of good will, a request for more understanding'.²

More influential for borderland pupils in Polish Upper Silesia and Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were changes implemented at a national level. Both in Poland and Belgium, new educational laws and pedagogical reforms were created in order to support children during their language learning process and overcome the contradictions and inconsistencies known at the time in existing systems of power. However, widely diverging interpretations on how a universal childhood related to language learning in primary schools reigned in Poland and Belgium. Whereas a new educational law in Poland provoked conflict over language learning, in Belgium, measures were implemented in order to prevent such conflicts.

The new Polish educational law of 1932 (often referred to as the Jędrzejewicz law after the minister responsible for its drafting and implementation, Janusz Jędrzejewicz) foregrounded Polish as the language of the nation, and established a primary school curriculum without foreign language training. This led to a further decline in the number of primary schools offering teaching in a language other than Polish across the country. Although the idea was to establish a centralised seven-year primary school system throughout Poland, the economic crisis meant that schools in many villages could not offer the entire curriculum, which, as a result, cut children off from further educational opportunities.³ In the case of Polish Upper Silesia, this new law aimed to encourage borderland pupils to be educated in Polish instead of German. However, this did not prevent conflicts over language learning in primary schools, but instead redirected contradictions and inconsistencies in the system of power to new topics. It created other front lines of battles over human territoriality, but the dynamics of the power struggle remained similar to those in the years before (1926–1932).

In a similar spirit to the Jędrzejewicz law in Poland, Flemish nationalists wanted 'their' children to be taught in 'their' language on 'their' lands, although they never had the ambition of establishing a primary school system without foreign language training on offer. The new educational law issued in Belgium in 1932 was a compromise between these Flemish nationalist demands, a majority of the other Belgian statesmen (with differing ideas among themselves), and the reality of language use in the city of Brussels and municipalities along the census-defined linguistic border line. In Wallonia and Flanders, the language of instruction was no lon-

ger to be the mother tongue of a child, but the language of the region. In Brussels and along the linguistic border line, however, the principle that children were to receive their primary education in their mother tongue remained in place.⁴ As we will see, in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, these legal changes, generated by a democratic regime entrusting municipalities with their implementation, successfully responded to the needs of borderland inhabitants and relieved the conflict over human territoriality. Guardians in the region of Malmedy, for example, could change the language of instruction in primary schools from French, a language installed during the Baltia regime, to German.

By the middle of the chapter, the reader should be convinced that borderland pupils in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy had more beneficial language learning conditions than children living elsewhere in Belgium, or in Polish Upper Silesia. He or she may even consider the solution for these borderland pupils a much more effective alternative than the solution to protect national minorities applicable to Polish Upper Silesia at the time, where the role of supranational control weakened after Germany had left the League of Nations in 1933. However, it is argued that the attitude of Belgian statesmen towards their borderland pupils came at a certain cost. Whereas Belgian authorities chose to create a legal framework that prevented confrontations over language decisions in primary education, Polish authorities put more of their hope in shaping the human behaviour of borderland pupils, parents, teachers and clergymen (and thus working on styles of teaching and learning along the 'fourth face' of power, as defined in the second axis of the framework of comparison).

Polish statesmen and scientists had a greater interest in proliferating reform pedagogy than their Belgian counterparts, because this could align with Sanacja's vision of state upbringing. With the purpose being to make state upbringing (the ideology that was to guarantee a social revolution within the independent Polish state) successful in Polish Upper Silesia, methods of teaching and learning, it was believed, needed to be adjusted to the living conditions of the borderland child, so that the individual child could become the means to consolidate the Polish nation. The conviction that rural children all over Poland, including in Polish Upper Silesia, had the 'right to be a child' became the argument to claim rural children for the Polish nation.⁵ As a result, the Silesian child was problematised and typified by scientists as needing the cure of professional caregivers, such as teachers, pedagogues and psychologists. In the mid-1930s, the borderland of Polish Upper Silesia turned into a space where scientists experimented with new methodologies and discovered new opportunities to approach local children. The borderlands became a resource. Whereas borderland pupils in Polish Upper Silesia enjoyed the devoted commitment of sci-

entists and teachers wishing to get to know their language learning conditions and improve them, borderland pupils in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were largely ignored. A systematic comparison of the influence of reform pedagogy on language learning in the two case study borderlands enables us to come to see what Robert Musil has called *Möglichkeitssinn* (the sense of the possible).⁶ By situating a certain development alongside an alternative one, we can come to discern how the past could have looked different had another path been taken.⁷

It is not that reform pedagogy was less present in Belgium than in Poland. In fact, the curriculum reform of 1936 put the child, instead of the teaching content, at the centre of the everyday school context as the solution to a pedagogisation of the masses. Inspired by Belgium's most influential reform pedagogue and medical doctor, Ovide Decroly, the programme suggested that since children experience their social environment as a whole, teaching needed to be concentrated on specific topics of interests, instead of being split up into different topics. However, Roman Catholic Church authorities had a decisive say in the organisation of primary education in Belgium, and banned the programme out of fear that ideas of progress would lead to an alienation with tradition and seed revolutionary thoughts in the masses. Such tendencies needed to be cured by means of strong dogmatic Catholic pedagogy aimed at repression and moral reorientation. As was the case in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, all primary schools were Catholic, and it was Catholic pedagogy that set the tone. Locked in a dogmatic form of Christocentrism exalted 'above and outside of time', this pedagogy resisted all attempts to individualise and empower pupils.⁸ Influential Catholic pedagogy very often left unquestioned borderland pupils' styles of learning (as was the case in many other places in Belgium). In the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, changing the mentalities and attitudes of teachers and children was the last thing on the minds of Belgian policymakers, teachers and priests. Providing young inhabitants with a universal childhood experience could not serve the purpose of overturning social relations. Despite the introduction of male universal suffrage, the traditional aristocratic elite managed to uphold its privileged social position in Belgium and keep the democratisation of political life under control.⁹ Belgian policymakers and the Catholic Church, moreover, respected the *modus vivendi* they had worked out in 1914, when Catholic schools were state subsidised without having to accept state interference in their functioning. The systematic comparison offered in this chapter will reveal how in the interwar years either pedagogical innovation or its complete rejection were possible paths, and how these paths could even co-exist within one country. Marc Depaepe, Maurits De Vroede and Frank Simon observed of

the 1936 Belgian curriculum reform: 'It seems that there was an inevitable gap between the idealistic context of the innovation on the one hand and the sociohistorical reality in which it had to be implemented on the other. Such a discrepancy is, perhaps, perennial rather than unique in the history of education.'¹⁰

Apart from the differences characterising the language learning conditions of borderland pupils in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, two important similarities stood out. Both the transnational interest of Germany and geopolitics challenged the language learning of pupils in the two case study borderlands. By the mid-1930s, a major aim of their German neighbour was the unification of all the people considered German into one empire.¹¹ As a result, Germany increased material donations to support the German language learning of borderland pupils. Whereas the Geneva Convention facilitated an open flow of material support across the border to Polish Upper Silesia until 1937, the absence of a similar regulation in the case of the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy meant that the material support from Germany had to remain hidden to the Belgian public eye (and, until now, also to historians).

Another similarity lay in the fact that the two case study borderlands no longer played a crucial role in international politics themselves. Polish authorities, freed from their supranational obligations towards German speakers in Polish Upper Silesia after 1937, could now deny the right of German-speaking guardians to determine the mother tongue of their children.¹² The fact that the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were treated as potential currency to pay off the security of the Belgian mainland in the near future, on the other hand, meant that the Belgian state had also become as good as indifferent towards the language learning of its borderland pupils. Each of these elements will now be discussed and compared in greater detail.

Geopolitics and the State Border Line

The National Socialists' seizure of power in Germany in 1933 subverted the international mechanism of minority protection on the European continent.¹³ Nazism repudiated the Enlightenment values of freedom and equality, and heralded a dictatorial regime based on violence, racism and antisemitism. Back in Versailles, Germany had been considered a civilised state – in contrast to Eastern European states – and, as a result, had not been put under systematic supranational supervision over the way it treated Jews or non-German-speaking inhabitants on most of its lands,

with the exception of German Upper Silesia.¹⁴ While German statesmen had favoured a more offensive stance in international politics since the late 1920s, it was only in 1933 that Germany left the League of Nations, started to re-militarise, and to aspire explicitly to the re-annexation of the lands outside its state border lines considered to have been lost through the Treaty of Versailles. Within the Weimar Republic, Germanness had been defined through a sharing of appropriable characteristics, such as language and culture (and sometimes also religion), but after 1933 that Germanness became related to physical elements.¹⁵ The German community (*Volksgemeinschaft*) was to be composed exclusively of people with the correct racial identity. Belonging to the *Volk* became more important than holding citizenship of a state.¹⁶ With legislative power being placed in the hands of the government, the executive had more opportunities to proliferate this conviction.¹⁷

Poland

The Sanacja leadership reacted to these developments by annihilating the minority rights Poland had assured the League of Nations it would respect until a uniform European framework for protecting minorities had been developed.¹⁸ Instead, a bilateral Polish-German non-aggression pact was signed in January 1934, which significantly improved not only the economic relations between both countries, but also the treatment of the so-considered German national minority in places such as Polish Upper Silesia.¹⁹ In the same year, a compromise between Polish and German authorities on primary education in Polish Upper Silesia was signed, determining more favourable language learning conditions (a matter that will receive more detailed attention below) until the Geneva Convention was phased out in 1937.²⁰ A Polish state detached from most of its supranational obligations and more inclined towards Germany played into the hands of the National Socialists. Hitler considered a war with Stalin to be inevitable and envisioned Poland as forming a protective buffer zone between the German *Reich* and the Soviet Union. Throughout the 1930s, efforts were put into preparing the *Reich* for a comprehensive solution beyond its eastern border, instead of focusing solely on a possible annexation of the Polish regions that used to be German lands.²¹ Shortly after the German annexation of the Sudetenland in October 1938, Hitler demanded the annexation of the free city of Gdańsk and a connection road to East Prussia through the Polish Corridor, but did not yet intend to interfere with the sovereignty of Polish Upper Silesia.²² Polish politicians acted opportunistically during the reshuffle of international power relations. Once Czechoslovakia was weakened after losing territories to Germany,

the Polish army invaded the Czech part of Silesia, and stayed there until Poland, including Polish Upper Silesia, was attacked by the German army in September 1939.²³

Belgium

On its western borders, Germany's re-militarisation sparked discomfort among Belgian politicians. They feared a repeat of the scenario of 1914: that France and Germany would enter into a military confrontation, and that Belgium would face the consequences. In 1935, France did indeed sign a treaty of mutual assistance with the Soviet Union, setting in stone the fact that Germany would face a war on both fronts were it to engage in military expansion.²⁴ One year later, Germany did indeed violate the Locarno Treaties and put German troops on the German side of the Belgian-German border, in the Rhineland. In the spring of 1936, the Belgian Kingdom found itself caught between a leftist French neighbour allied with communist Russia and an expansionist Germany. It was at this unfavourable moment that the quadrennial parliamentary elections were scheduled to be held. These caused a landslide in political power relations, with parties denouncing parliamentary democracy attaining almost a quarter of the votes, some of them condemning Belgium's vassalage towards France.²⁵ Belgian foreign policymakers found in the Polish-German non-aggression pact a source of inspiration.²⁶ Embarking on a neutral course, they buried their promise to offer France military assistance in the case of a German invasion and started bilateral negotiations with Germany.²⁷ In 1937, Germany declared that it would respect Belgium's neutrality and guarantee the Belgian state border lines, a promise it repeated as late as August 1939, after Germany had swallowed up Czechoslovakia and found itself on the verge of war with Poland, but broke in May 1940.²⁸

Interestingly, the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were systematically kept out of the bilateral talks in the late 1930s. The Belgian Ambassador in Germany, Viscount Jacques Davignon, for example, had suggested to the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that a mixed commission modelled on the Geneva Convention would enable the Belgian government to exert more control over cultural activities in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, but his idea never made it to the Belgian-German negotiation table.²⁹ Both German and Belgian state representatives considered the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy as currency to pay off an upcoming geopolitical deal. Within Germany, the thought of buying these regions started to circulate again, whereas among Belgian diplomats the idea of giving these up if that could save the political independence of the kingdom gained ground.³⁰

During the negotiations, Germany displayed a double strategy towards the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy. Officially, it held back its claim to sovereignty, but, unofficially, it increased financial and material sponsoring of political and cultural activities in these borderlands. Whereas Flemish pro-German cultural organisations could openly count on financial support from Germany, organisations in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy received money in secret.³¹ Financial support for German-minded organisations in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy had already amounted to 60,000 German marks yearly at the end of the 1920s, but by the end of the 1930s, this yearly sum had increased to 113,200 DM, the equivalent of 765,000 USD in 2015.³² The coordinator of most of that aid was the German civil servant Franz Thedieck, who cooperated closely with the VDA, but also coordinated the work of other German organisations.³³ In 1934, he formulated his mission as ‘a politics in the service of Germanisation, calm and cautious, working in the long term, as that is essential in the region of Eupen-Malmedy’.³⁴ German aid was eagerly consumed by those borderland inhabitants who had become disillusioned after it had been revealed that Belgian statesmen covertly considered the Belgian-German state border line negotiable while openly demanding that the borderland population be loyal to the Belgian state. When more than 90 per cent of the population of Saarland (then under a League of Nations mandate) opted for inclusion in Nazi Germany instead of France in a 1935 referendum (which had been scheduled in the Treaty of Versailles), the Belgian Ambassador in Germany predicted that the significant majority in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy would be willing to declare in favour of Hitler’s Germany in the near future.³⁵ But he turned out to be wrong; in 1939, revisionists failed to achieve their goal of achieving the absolute majority in the parliamentary elections.³⁶

New Educational Laws

The situation of borderland schools in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy changed not only under the influence of geopolitical power reshufflings, but also as a result of long-awaited educational reforms meant to guarantee children a universal, modern childhood.

Poland

In Poland, the Sanacja regime tackled primary education policy after it had ensured a complete takeover of power. In 1932, the Polish Minister

responsible for education, Janusz Jędrzejewicz, introduced a major reform.³⁷ Most significantly, it established a centralised system of secular primary schooling all over Poland, consisting of seven years of education. Owing to limited financial means, only the first four years were on offer in village schools, and the later three years only in municipality or city schools. Because many pupils switched after the first four years to Polish-speaking evening classes for working pupils instead of having to commute, the educational law limited the social advance of rural children and caused a further reduction in the number of minority schools offering teaching in a language other than Polish.³⁸ In addition, placing public and private schools under the same law caused private schools – which were more numerous among minority schools – to face more legal regulations, regulations they often could not fulfil, and which led to their closure.³⁹ All teachers employed in state and private schools, for example, needed to hold Polish citizenship.⁴⁰

Another important characteristic of the Jędrzejewicz law was that from 1932 onwards, primary school children following the Polish-speaking curriculum in Poland were not obliged to receive foreign language training (although a foreign language could be taught as a supplementary course in the two highest classes).⁴¹ Meanwhile, children all over Poland receiving education in a language other than Polish, such as those following the German-speaking curriculum in Polish Upper Silesia, needed to learn Polish from the third class onwards,⁴² but a specific number of hours was not prescribed; the law required ‘a precise knowledge of the state language’ to be acquired.⁴³

The final important element of the law was the dominance of the Polish state over religious practices in schools, prescribing, for example, the right of school principals to intervene in all religious activities taking place in their schools. It was Jędrzejewicz’s conviction that religion should not influence the functioning of public institutions or sit in moral judgement on citizens.⁴⁴ The Catholic Church in Poland continued to battle areligious education, based on a statement made by Pope Pius XI in 1929 against pedagogical neutrality.⁴⁵

Polish Upper Silesia

Although Polish Upper Silesia enjoyed autonomy in educational measures, and Sanacja supporters never achieved a majority in the Silesian Parliament, the Jędrzejewicz reform was implemented here in 1932.⁴⁶ Despite the protests of Silesian parliamentarians and the Catholic Church, Voivode Michał Grażyński was able to introduce this Polish law in the autonomous border region by making use of a careless formulation in

the Organic Statute of the Silesian Voivodeship of 1920.⁴⁷ His decision annulled the voivodeship's autonomy in most domains related to education and bypassed the decision-making capacity of the Silesian Parliament. Instead of the Silesian Parliament, the Polish Parliament became more involved, but national minorities here held little sway. The political party that had defended their interests, the Union of National Minorities (*Blok Mniejszości Narodowych*), had ceased to play a political role in 1930, when the elections gave the *Sanacja* regime the majority of the votes.⁴⁸ Moreover, after the death of Józef Piłsudski in 1935, the elected assembly saw its influence reduced and Poland began to be run autocratically by a small group of people who had closely cooperated with the former marshal and who endorsed the ex-combatant myth of those whose military effort had brought about the resurrection of the state in 1918.⁴⁹

The new legal framework could not prevent the re-emergence of a power struggle over language learning between supranational, national and regional historical actors, but merely redirected such struggles. A repetition of the power struggle over human territoriality from earlier years was the result. These battles were often won by the historical actor who could afford the highest financial injection; money continued to play a crucial role in the spatialisation of power.⁵⁰

The first inconsistency in the new system of power applicable to Polish Upper Silesia concerned the bilateral Polish-German compromise of 1934, which failed in its attempts to resolve the issue of competition among pupils for access to specific schools, which had escalated between 1926 and 1932. As part of this compromise, the need for parents to fill in language declarations was abandoned, and language exams were re-established and made compulsory for every child wanting to receive teaching in German. A joint examining committee staffed by representatives of the Silesian Voivodeship Office and the *Volksbund* tested whether a child knew enough German to benefit from taking its courses in German. In reality, however, inconsistencies were simply duplicated. Among the pupils taking the language exam in 1936, for example, were thirteen-year-old Wilhelm Papon and nine-year-old Alfred Stanko. Their parents wanted them to change from the public Polish-speaking school in Koszęcin to the private German-speaking school in the same village.⁵¹ The joint examining committee could not come to a decision as to whether the boys knew German well enough to benefit from education in German, and therefore repeated the solution developed at the end of the 1920s. It brought in an impartial examiner, this time from Austria, whose function was similar to the one Wilhelm Maurer had held before.⁵² When Wilhelm Papon and Alfred Stanko retook the exam in front of the Austrian pedagogue, they failed.⁵³ Between 1933 and 1937, the percentage of pupils passing the tests fell by

7 per cent each year.⁵⁴ Interestingly, however, the private German-speaking school of Koszęcin did not experience a decline in the number of pupils. Smaller German minority schools in the Lubliniec district needed to close their doors, but their pupils could commute to the Koszęcin private school in a school bus paid for by the owner of the school, the Prince of Hohenlohe.⁵⁵ As a result, the number of children attending his school doubled in 1934 from 63 to 137, steadily increased to 142 in 1935, and remained at that level until 1937.⁵⁶ German-speaking schools were able to resist a significant reduction in the number of private schools owing to the material welfare of pupils' parents and the financial and material support sent from Germany.⁵⁷ In Polish Upper Silesia, moreover, the Geneva Convention remained in force until 1937, thanks to which the number of German-speaking schools declined more slowly than those in Greater Poland and Pomerania.⁵⁸

The second inconsistency in the new system of power applicable to Polish Upper Silesia was noticeable in the school curriculum. The standardisation of the school curriculum throughout Poland meant that the primary school curriculum in Polish Upper Silesia was reduced from eight to seven years. In the Lubliniec bilingual school, a seven-year and an eight-year curriculum were introduced within the Polish learning branch – the eight-year one being paid for by Silesian authorities. Within the German-speaking branch, however, only a seven-year curriculum remained.⁵⁹ As there was no longer a law applicable to the eight-year curriculum of primary schooling, neither the Volksbund nor pupils' parents could demand from the voivodeship permission to organise the eighth year of schooling.

The third inconsistency arose when the Polish government's budget for education shrank as a result of the economic recession, merely a year after the Jędrzejewicz law had come into force.⁶⁰ As a result, from early on Polish policymakers needed to lower their ambitions when it came to attracting pupils in Polish Upper Silesia to Polish-speaking schools. It was decided that these children were to start primary school at the age of seven, as was the case in the rest of Poland, instead of continuing to start at the age of six.⁶¹ The budget cuts happened precisely at the moment when the children of the postwar demographic boom started to fill the schools. In the Lubliniec school, for example, 720 pupils had attended the school in 1925–1926, but by 1932–1933 their number had already increased to 1,287.⁶² As many parents were used to sending their children to school at the age of six, this decision caused an exponential rise in the number of kindergartens, greater than elsewhere in Poland, which were paid for with regional public money from the Silesian Voivodeship, city councils, and private donors.⁶³

These are three examples of how money could considerably counter-balance the universalisation of primary education understood as privileging the Polish language over other languages spoken in interwar Poland. Two other factors that could turn an inconsistency into a benefit for borderland children were Polish policymakers' concerns regarding their country's international relations and local protest. After the position of the League of Nations had been weakened, school inspectors throughout Polish Upper Silesia started to force teachers in German-speaking curricula to adhere to the Grabski law of 1924. This resulted in a reduction of the number of pupils receiving their entire school curriculum in a language other than Polish in schools not covered by Article 9 in the Minority Treaty (and hence *de jure* not in Polish Upper Silesia). School inspectors concluded, for example, that the content of history classes provided in the German language was unsatisfactory and suggested that these classes be taught in Polish instead; however, the Polish government later allowed for these courses to be taught in German again, in order not to endanger Polish-German bilateral relations.⁶⁴ In addition, the loudest criticisms of the Jędrzejewicz reform in Polish Upper Silesia did not concern language learning regulations, but rather the threat to reduce religious instruction from four to two hours a week, which eventually did not happen.⁶⁵ The dominance of the Polish state over religious practices in schools was not as great in Polish Upper Silesia as elsewhere in Poland, one of the few exceptions being that after the implementation of the 1932 law schools could retain their Catholic status.⁶⁶

Belgium

In Belgium, the universalisation of childhood by means of primary education was understood differently than in Poland. The new educational law of 1932 standardising primary education was pushed for by Flemish nationalists with intentions similar to those of Polish nationalists, but the law came about during a democratic decision-making procedure in which these Flemish nationalists were a minority. The law stated, first, that the language spoken in a child's social environment, whether that be in Wallonia or Flanders, would now be the language of instruction in primary schools, and not the child's mother tongue. Second, foreign language training would now start from the fifth year onwards.⁶⁷ With the aim of creating two large monolingual regions within Belgium, the 1932 education law in Belgium annulled the permanent status of French-speaking schools in Flanders. If at least 30 per cent of the population in a municipality claimed to speak the non-dominant language, temporary (and not permanent, as had previously been the case) so-called trans-

mutation classes could host their children from then on. In these classes, foreign language training was introduced from the third year onwards and the number of hours devoted to it increased over the years.

However, the introduction of these transmutation classes went against the idea of offering similar conditions of language learning in Wallonia and in Flanders, as there was a lack of transmutation classes for Dutch-speaking children in Wallonia. The requirement to set up such classes had been expressed by the Flemish socialist politician Camille Huysmans in the discussions preceding the law's passage, when the Liberal Party had defended the existence of permanent French-speaking schools in Flanders. However, afraid to 'introduce bilingualism in Wallonia', as the socialist Walloon politician Jules Destrée formulated it, he conceded that transforming the French-speaking schools outside of Wallonia with a permanent status into transmutation schools was a compromise that was preferable to the establishment of Dutch-speaking schools in Wallonia.⁶⁸

Schools in Brussels and in municipalities along the language border (a mobile border established on the basis of the outcome of censuses organised every ten years in order to detect the mother tongue of inhabitants) maintained the principle of mother tongue recruitment and offered a more bilingual regime. Whereas the previous educational law of 1914 had mentioned only that the language of instruction could differ from the dominant language spoken in the children's social environment, the new law stipulated that where 30 per cent of guardians wished their children to be educated in a language different from the dominant language indicated in the latest census, such education was required to be provided. Foreign language training was to start in the third year, with the option to apply for earlier foreign language training, which could be permitted by means of a Royal Decree. Although guardians were supposed to indicate the mother tongue of their children, they often declared the language in which they wanted their children to receive instruction. The language inspectors controlling the implementation of the law observed countless violations in this respect, but out of respect for the freedom of guardians in choosing a school for their children, no sanctions followed. Moreover, school buildings could often be made available for newly established French-speaking, but not Dutch-speaking, classes, because the parents interested in the former were well represented in local politics.⁶⁹ The building of schools in Belgium remained the sole responsibility of municipalities until 1937, when it was entrusted to the state in order to ensure uniform standards.⁷⁰ Belgian statesmen did not have the intention of creating a nationalised landscape by erecting school buildings. As a consequence, schools in Brussels and in municipalities along language borders continued to play an important role in enabling Dutch-speaking children

to speak French fluently – as opposed to enabling French-speaking children to speak Dutch fluently.⁷¹

The Regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy

The law did not convert the German-speaking zone earlier established by Herman Baltia into a third language region. However, it did include a clause specifying that in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy the government could allow for conditions departing from the rules outlined for children in Brussels and municipalities along the language border.⁷² Interestingly, nobody made use of that specific clause throughout the 1930s.⁷³ Although not specifically designed for the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, the law did resolve the public tensions over language learning from before and put an end to regional battles over language learning. It even allowed municipality schools in the French-speaking zone of former Eupen-Malmedy, encompassing inhabitants who had declared themselves either French speakers or bilingual in Baltia's language survey of 1920, to conduct the most consistent action against Francisation in the whole of Belgium. Baltia had dictated here that all pupils start their education in French, and this continued after the region lost its autonomous status in 1925.⁷⁴ Municipalities could convert these French-speaking schools into schools offering education in German, with French added as a foreign language in the third year of the school curriculum. A report composed by students from Germany during their scientific field trip to the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy stated that in 1938 a majority of schools (thirteen out of twenty-one) had done so.⁷⁵ A critical interpretation of that report is necessary, as, following Hitler's assumption to power, pedagogical academies in Germany had been purified of people hostile to the new regime.⁷⁶ New pedagogical academies, established in German peripheral rural areas near state border lines, were engaged in gathering scientific proof that the inhabitants on the other side also belonged to the German *Volk*.⁷⁷ In the absence of other sources, it is impossible to verify the report, but the simple fact remains that the Belgian state provided a legal framework in which this phenomenon was made possible.

The German-speaking children in the French-speaking zone of former Eupen-Malmedy appeared to be the true beneficiaries of the Belgian Education Act of 1932. These inhabitants could group together to change their education from French, a language Baltia imposed on them with a clear nationalising aim in mind, to German, a language they preferred. No supranational institution was needed to enable borderland pupils in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy to enjoy all the language learning conditions they wished for. Belgian policymakers themselves

went through a democratic decision-making procedure and provided borderland inhabitants with the legal framework to make such a change. An additional legal clause even stipulated that borderland inhabitants could have proposed yet another solution. These German-speaking pupils found themselves in a more advantageous situation than Dutch-speaking pupils in Brussels, for example, who had the right to open classes in Dutch for their children, but lacked the necessary school buildings.⁷⁸ Indeed, in the villages around the city of Malmedy, Prussian authorities had already erected a sufficient number of school buildings.

Pedagogical Reforms

The new educational laws introduced in Poland and Belgium in 1932 were not only different, they also worked out differently in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy. Whereas in Polish Upper Silesia, the Jędrzejewicz law merely redirected the battle over human territoriality to other topics, in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, the new law unintentionally put an end to such battles. Along with the introduction of new educational laws, the systems of power applicable to Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were influenced by long awaited pedagogical reforms that were to enable children to enjoy a universal childhood. The idea that the language learning of pupils needed to be understood more broadly and encompass the social environment of the child, along with the belief that styles of teaching and learning could guide human behaviour in a desired direction, notions already well developed in the German Empire, now took hold in Poland and Belgium, but in ways that worked out more beneficially for children in Polish Upper Silesia than in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy.

Polish Upper Silesia

In the 1930s, reform pedagogy was of pivotal importance to Polish statesmen. During his visit to Poland in 1935, even the Head of the International Office of Education in Geneva, the Swiss child psychologist Jean Piaget, was impressed by their eagerness to proliferate reform pedagogy.⁷⁹ Reform pedagogy served their aim of moulding children into citizens who would endorse the Sanacja ideology. The Sanacja-supporting Minister of Education, Janusz Jędrzejewicz, for example, aimed to educate every child to become 'a person capable of consciously taking part in collective social life'.⁸⁰ The demographic boom predicted that social life could no longer be

dominated by the aristocratic elite. Sacrificing oneself for the state was to become the gateway to social advancement.⁸¹

In order to win the masses over to that vision, regional values were integrated into the teaching of the Polish language and culture.⁸² Regionalism was not a tool to claim that Polish Upper Silesia was different from, for instance, Mazovia or Pomerania, but to display how similar Polish Upper Silesia and its destiny were to the rest of the country. In Poland, scientists were convinced that state upbringing could come about only if it were grounded in the traditions of the various national minorities inhabiting Poland.⁸³ They urged for research to be carried out on rural children because of what the influential Polish pedagogue Zygmunt Mysłakowski called their 'pivotal importance' for the 'future' of the Polish nation.⁸⁴ Some of them started to research the living conditions of rural children in Polish Upper Silesia because they believed their findings could help to improve the children's school results and future professional careers within Poland. Many of these scientists engaged local teachers in carrying out their experiments.⁸⁵ Their enthusiasm led to a sprawl of initiatives both inside and outside research institutes, initiatives that shed some light on styles of teaching and learning in Polish Upper Silesia, but did not come to any broader conclusions.⁸⁶ However, some of these studies deserve to be looked at in greater detail because they used scientific methodologies that were truly innovative in Europe at the time. In what follows, I shall show how styles of teaching and learning were discovered in the Polish Upper Silesia of the 1930s, and seek to establish reasons why these groundbreaking scientific studies failed to generate societal change.

The first group of studies was generated by scientists from Warsaw, who spent little time in Polish Upper Silesia, used research techniques they felt familiar with, and published their results in general Polish scientific journals or Varsovian publishing houses. A Polish sociologist, Zygmunt Gryń, sent out questionnaires for pupils to teachers in Polish-speaking schools. His analysis revealed that a majority of the children did not do their homework or preferred to do it at school, because they considered the conditions at home inadequate, they needed to perform physical labour, they were hungry, or they did not have anything to write with.⁸⁷

Dr Konstanty Sobolski, a teacher at a Polish-speaking state seminary for boys south of Katowice, composed a typology of a Silesian rural child and submitted it to a writing competition for teachers organised by Stanisław Mariusz Studencki and Maria Librachowa. The latter was a leading child psychologist who had received her training in pedagogy in Brussels in the first decade of the twentieth century.⁸⁸ Inspired by German psychological research, the psychologists believed that the natural environment in which rural children grew up had an influence on their minds and could

explain why their school results were worse than those of children growing up in cities.⁸⁹ They aimed at generating a ‘psychological characteristic of a rural child’:

If you want to get into the mind of a rural child, you need to take into consideration his defining characteristics. However, this indication is only the starting point, the moment of approaching the child’s mind. Further roads may divide into two opposite directions, depending on what we intend to achieve. Therefore, it will either be deemed necessary to maintain and nurture these characteristics as individualizing characteristics, and therefore both the programme and teaching method should be oriented towards concretism and practicism, avoiding abstraction and theorisation; or, alternatively, we should seek to stimulate and strengthen the weakened functions of the mind, as long as we recognize their value and importance for the development of the individual. . . . From the standpoint of the rights of the individual and the principle of social justice, and even from the standpoint of a deeply understood social utility, only the principle of individualisation, consisting in the strengthening and stimulation of weakened psychological dispositions, seems justified, as long as they belong to those that are needed to reach a higher level of spiritual development.⁹⁰

Sobolski’s essay reads like a public cry for a universal childhood. A Silesian rural child, Sobolski wrote, enjoyed better hygienic conditions than elsewhere in Poland, but from the age of five needed to perform physical work, which ‘restricted normal physical development’ and made the child ‘less joyful and at times depressive’.⁹¹ Sobolski pointed to the importance of the family during the formation of the child’s personality. Sobolski said Silesian children did not have the courage to develop their own opinions, as they were expected to serve on the family farm. More than elsewhere in Poland, he added, Silesian children were not supposed to reflect on moral categories, as religion offered a set of dominant guidelines for life practices.⁹² As a result, Silesian children were practical and energetic: ‘very few slow and thoughtful types here’.⁹³ Just like Librachowa, Sobolski was firmly convinced that Silesian children possessed creative potential.⁹⁴ We need, Sobolski concluded, to ‘extract these values and strengths flourishing in the child, which can be of invaluable benefit to the nation and the state’.⁹⁵

On the basis of the collected essays containing regional typologies of rural children throughout Poland, the psychologists published their psychological characteristic of the rural child. The innovative insight provided by the book was a causal relation between the deplorable hygienic conditions at home and the weakened health and hampered development of children growing up in the countryside.⁹⁶ Librachowa therefore recommended a pedagogical strategy to support these rural children during their development. The societal ‘disease’ of rural children’s poor school

results, Librachowa suggested, 'needed to be cured at its source, in the living conditions of rural children at home'.⁹⁷ Children, she pleaded, needed to be given the right to be children. Books, games and 'as many toys as possible' were needed to stimulate children's imagination.⁹⁸

The work of Jan Szczepański (discussed in chapter three) can also be situated within this group. The Varsovian sociologist organised a writing contest in Polish and discovered that parents in Polish Upper Silesia gave their children the message that schools were something foreign to them, an 'unavoidable necessity' they simply had to bear, leading to the children valuing their classmates more than their teachers.⁹⁹

A second group of research publications emerged at the Pedagogical Institute in Katowice, which, as we saw in the previous chapter, had been set up in 1928 and was financed by the Polish government. The director, the Cracovian pedagogue Zygmunt Mysłakowski, trained local teachers to select and observe families on the way in which they educated their children. Andrzej Michna was among the first teachers to attend a workshop at the Pedagogical Institute in Katowice.¹⁰⁰ He was born in Upper Silesia and ran the only primary school in Wikowyje, a village of 720 people situated south of Katowice.¹⁰¹ Mysłakowski developed a research methodology based on the works of two French scientists from the famous social science school (*la science sociale*). He was inspired by the French social engineer and politician Frédéric le Play, who conducted a survey among worker families throughout France and developed a programme of social reforms on the basis of his analysis, as well as by Paul Descamps, who put forward a programme of dynamic education aiming to bring up individuals capable of adapting their practices to an ever-changing social environment.¹⁰² Mysłakowski sent out his teachers to conduct empirical fieldwork with a scheme of open questions related to the lifeworlds of rural children.¹⁰³ Within that scheme, Andrzej Michna included his own methodology.¹⁰⁴ Michna developed five questions for children attending school:

Who do you want to be?
Which hero do you like the most?
Who in the village would you like to be similar to?
Which books do you read most often?
Who do you play with?¹⁰⁵

Michna discovered that rural children were often less able than children growing up in cities to express their experiences verbally, because they concentrated more on developing an intuitive understanding of the weather and the land.¹⁰⁶ He therefore praised all the more the efforts of parents to talk to their children:

The father is usually taciturn, but becomes talkative when he is alone with the children. Little Stefek can walk with his father for half a day next to the plough, and keeps on talking to him. When he came back from school, I heard a fragment of their conversation. Stefek: Dad, if we kept on ploughing through the teacher's garden, through the mayor's lake, through Podlesie and further and further, where would we end up? Father: Well, we would probably come to the sea. Stefek: What is that, the sea? Father: It is a big lake, even bigger than the one at Spyra's place. Stefek: Even bigger, as big as the one at Mikołów?¹⁰⁷

To Zygmunt Mysłakowski, this scene looked like 'a painting of the Flemish school, full of passion for realism and with a love for facts'.¹⁰⁸ It justified to him how scientists and teachers could contribute to the consolidation of a Polish nation based on cultural and linguistic diversity.¹⁰⁹ In the wealthiest family of his village, children answered Michna's self-developed questions as follows:

Otylja: 1. I want to marry a nice boy, a boy I choose myself. 2. Duke Michorowski. 3. I want to be like my mother because she does not do any wrong to people. 4. I prefer reading about love. 5. I consider H. Sp. my friend, because she will not reveal a secret entrusted to her.

Clara: 1. I want to be a teacher. 2. Andrzej Kmicić [hero of Sienkiewicz's novel *The Deluge*]. 3. I want to be like the school principal, because he teaches well. 4. I read about love, but not stupid stories like Tila. 5. I am friends with B.K. because she is a decent girl.

Helena: 1. I want to be a publican, in order to run the pub differently from my aunt. 2. I like everybody who is decent. 3. I do not want to be like anyone in the village. 4. I read fairy tales in which somebody finds a lot of money. 5. I am not friends with anybody.¹¹⁰

Michna praised the children for having a realistic plan for their future. The answers provided by some of the children in the poorest family, now headed by an unemployed father, were as follows:

Lucja: 1. I want to be a merchant because they make a lot of money and live well. 2. I like Casimir the Great the most because he reigned well. 3. I want to be like M.B. because she is sitting in the store all day selling things. 4. I love reading about kings and rich people. 5. I hang out with M.B., but she does not really want to.

Paweł: 1. I want to be a locksmith because he is capable of doing everything and has a lot of money. 2. I like that one who flew from America over the sea, because he was not afraid. 3. I want to be like S.P., a wheeler, because he is a foreman and has pupils. 4. I read nothing because my eyes hurt. 5. I am friends with A. R., because he is smart and can clown around.

Gertrude: 1. I would like to be a teacher, in order to make money and pay back my parents what they are now investing in raising me. 2. I like Casimir the

Great because he built up Poland after the wars. 3. I want to be like Jutta [a nine-month-old baby] because she is happy and she does not know about anything. 4. I prefer reading fairy tales because there are different jokes to laugh at. 5. I do not have friends because I have no time.

Michna blamed the parents for their lack of authority, which caused the children to develop escape strategies that exceeded their physical and financial possibilities.¹¹¹ He did not, however, blame the parents for the difficulties their offspring had following the lessons in class because they were hungry. Michna's interpretation shows that his primary concern was for families to be responsible for ensuring the stability of the village community, not to educate imaginative adults. Mysłakowski did not comment on these findings. Did he remain silent because he had once believed Michna could become the kind of creative teacher capable of generating social change, but who turned out to be too conservative to bring about social reform?¹¹²

Another study conducted at the Pedagogical Institute in Katowice tested the veracity of a widely held opinion among teachers in Polish Upper Silesia, that Silesian children were themselves to blame for the fact their school results were worse than those of pupils in the Krakow region, given the fact that Silesian children were taught in the best school buildings the country possessed.¹¹³ Children were asked to fill in the most common intelligence test at the time, the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale adapted by Lewis M. Terman in 1916, as well as the first Polish intelligence test developed by Maria Grzywak-Kaczyńska, who had received part of her education in Switzerland and was Poland's first school psychologist.¹¹⁴ However, when Józef Pieter realised that pupils in Polish Upper Silesia experienced problems understanding the Polish words in the tests, he developed his own questionnaire to accompany the tests. The questionnaire was to be filled in by local teachers and quantified the extent to which predefined elements in the pupils' environment correlated to the formation of their intelligence.¹¹⁵ It evaluated, for example, the profession of the children's parents, from 'extremely diverse ways of earning money (+10)' to 'an unemployed environment (-10)'; the family of the children: 'father and mother (0), father or mother (-5), orphan (-15)'; access to alcohol: 'very easy access (-15), occasional access (-5), rare access (0)'; and occasional factors, such as 'the strong influence of a person or book on children living in bad conditions (+50)'.¹¹⁶ Pieter concluded that there was a significant statistical correlation between the living environment of the children in Polish Upper Silesia and their intelligence.¹¹⁷

The final group of sources took the form of pedagogical experiments developed by teachers in Polish Upper Silesia. The work of Gustaw Morcinek, probably Silesia's most famous teacher, offers us a splendid exam-

ple of the kind of civic education Sanacja ideologists wanted to generate.¹¹⁸ Morcinek received his teacher training in Galicia before the First World War and became a teacher in 1922 in the part of Polish Upper Silesia that had belonged to Galicia. He combined his job as a primary school teacher in Skoczów, a village in the vicinity of Bielsko-Biała, with a career as a writer of columns and children's books.¹¹⁹ In his famous fictional trilogy for children set in his own village, he described how his heroes, representing different social groups, learned Polish in school.¹²⁰ The heroes spoke with each other in Silesian or Polish, made language mistakes in their Polish essays and corrected these later spontaneously by themselves or following the advice of a classmate.¹²¹ The trilogy had a scope reaching well beyond Polish Upper Silesia, as the author included selected extracts of letters he had received from children from all over Poland commenting on his columns. He presented these extracts as they had been written, with all the spelling mistakes that entailed, and added comments of his own. Interested in the spontaneity of the child-writer, Morcinek especially criticised the influence of teachers and parents on how children wrote. He encouraged children to talk to and help each other, as well as to send letters and little gifts to children elsewhere in Poland.¹²²

Looking at the school journal *The Young Citizen* (*Młody Obywatel*), an initiative launched in 1934 in the primary school of Lubliniec by the Polish language teacher Stanisław Owczarek, we come to understand why Morcinek's fictional world could not match up with reality.¹²³ Owczarek responded to a circular of the Polish Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment (Ministerstwo Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia – hereinafter MWRIOP) encouraging school teachers to submit school journals for a competition.¹²⁴ In *The Young Citizen*, Owczarek presented Piłsudski's Polish Legions (operating within the Habsburg army) as the army responsible for bringing about Polish independence, despite the limited role it had played during the First World War.¹²⁵ Being a young citizen, pupils learned, meant bringing about the kind of social relationships Józef Piłsudski had established and supervised within the Legions.¹²⁶ Fifth-grade pupil Kryśia Gotzówna proved she had understood that lesson well. On the occasion of the anniversary of Polish independence, she wrote: 'Independence, do you know who fought for it? Grandfather Józef Piłsudski, popularly called Ziuk. In his younger years, he was hard and tenacious.' Kryśia described how Ziuk had secretly read Polish books when he was young, and had loved his soldiers during the First World War, many of whom had not even been fifteen years old. These soldiers, Kryśia informed her classmates, gave their lives for him and helped to establish a free Poland 'for us'. Kryśia encouraged her readers to behave like these soldiers: 'Let us learn diligently and let us be courteous, because Grandfa-

ther loves children, but diligent and good ones.'¹²⁷ During the First World War, a propaganda machinery had already begun to create the image of Józef Piłsudski as a grandfather who took good care of his troops, paying visits to young wounded soldiers in field hospitals.¹²⁸ By 1934, the heroification of Józef Piłsudski had proliferated widely, and this process would only accelerate after his death one year later.¹²⁹

The school journal ran for only a year and a half. Many causes can be given for its failure. Owczarek appeared unable to resolve the question of linguistic diversity.¹³⁰ Printed only in Polish, *The Young Citizen* failed to appeal to the pupils attending the German-speaking branch within the same school. In all the volumes of the school journal that remain, the latter did not feature once. Stanisław Owczarek also visibly struggled with the regionalism even Voivode Michał Grażyński had come to stand for.



FIGURE 5.1. The school journal *The Young Citizen*, produced by the bilingual primary school in Lubliniec, was printed only in Polish. *Młody Obywatel*, 1935, vol. 2, 3, front cover (copyright: Public Primary School in Lubliniec Nr. 1).

Whereas in the 1920s Grażyński had ordered the systematic replacement of Silesian by Polish in education (as exemplified most clearly by Jan Żebrok's textbooks, discussed in chapter four, which were employed to curb the use of Silesian), by the early 1930s, he had come to consider Silesian a regional tradition that could enrich the Polish language.¹³¹ Instead, Owczarek, while still not encouraging his pupils to use Silesian expressions, did encourage them to make connections between the origins of the land they called home and the re-emergence of the Polish state, including in the journal their essays about mediaeval Silesian Church chapels.¹³² His attempt to include religious elements in the journal was doomed to fail, as the teaching personnel in the bilingual school of Lubliniec remained deeply divided between two groups. On the one hand, there were teachers like Owczarek, who had migrated to Lubliniec and who was a member of the Association of Polish Teachers (Związek Nauczycieli Polskich – hereinafter ZNP), an organisation supporting Sanacja ideology and running summer courses in reform pedagogy.¹³³ A significant part of the teaching personnel, including most of the locally recruited teachers, however, belonged to a religiously oriented labour organisation.¹³⁴ Another reason for *The Young Citizen's* failure can be found in its lack of appeal to pupils. The children who wrote readers' letters to the journal revealed they liked the crosswords the most.¹³⁵

What emerges most clearly from the rich descriptions of the lifeworlds of children in the writings of scientists and teachers is the Silesian rural child's struggle to learn languages, despite being taught in Poland's best school buildings. Child labour, hunger, their religious conviction and pragmatic approach to life were considered obstacles to the transformation of these borderland children into creative future citizens of the Polish state. The fictional heroes in Morcinek's children's books succeeded in learning languages through working together, but the children making the school journal *The Young Citizen* in the Lubliniec primary school did not. The sources reveal a corps of teachers concerned with bringing about a universal childhood, but differing in their interpretation of what that had to entail. Whereas Dr Sobolski contributed to the generation of new scientific findings in order to bring about a social revolution, and Gustaw Morcinek used fiction to instil in young readers a sense of civic responsibility, a teacher like Stanisław Owczarek was at best only a modest reformer. Andrzej Michna's publication offers the most in-depth portrait of a teacher whose traditionalist conceptions hindered his ability to generate social change. In sum, a number of factors impeded the publications' chances of generating social change: the fragmentation of the Polish scientific landscape, the weak affinity of some of the scientists with life in Polish Upper Silesia, the different opinions among scientists and teachers on what lan-

guage learning should look like, and the hostile attitude of the Catholic Church towards reform pedagogy.

The Regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy

In Belgium, an educational programme deeply influenced by the scientific insights of Belgium's most famous reform pedagogue Ovide Decroly (1871–1932) was introduced, with the aim of spreading reform pedagogy among the masses. The educational task of teachers was to talk with pupils in a way which resembled familial conversations, to allow each individual child to speak his or her own language, and to let them play, since it was believed, somewhat unrealistically, that this would help them to speak with greater grammatical accuracy. Whereas textbooks had previously constituted the bedrock of the simultaneous teaching method, they were now merely a reservoir wherein pupils could find information.¹³⁶ Children's interest in disciplines other than mathematics, reading and writing was to be triggered by interest centres to be chosen from the regional lifeworlds of children, starting from 'the school, the church, the parental home, the garden, or the pond with their countless associations'.¹³⁷ Thus, in Belgium regional elements were also to be included in teaching, but there was no indication on how the regional and national were related. The strength of the reform programme clearly needs to be situated more in the pedagogical ideals it propagated than in the way these ideals were to be realised. It was left up to the creativity of individual teachers to make the programme's ideas intelligible to their pupils.

Since the reform programme was not legally binding, school principals had the freedom of choosing whether or not to implement it. In 1938, only 467 schools in Flanders had included the programme in its school curriculum, whereas 2,043 had not.¹³⁸ Catholic school principals were especially fierce in denouncing a reform they believed would reduce discipline, promote individualism, and which was deprived of transcendentalism.¹³⁹ The training offered in teaching seminars, moreover, did not change as a result of the reform programme. Teachers continued to be taught to act like shepherds, to 'intervene, punish and reward' rather than to listen, accept and converse. 'Adult's logic' was to set the tone, not 'the culture of the inner child'.¹⁴⁰

The Belgian Kingdom was a socially stable but politically unstable entity, as a result of which it was hard to find politicians or scientists eager to generate social upheaval. In contrast to what happened in Polish Upper Silesia, rural children in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were not called upon to be empowered and join the nation-state's elite.¹⁴¹ Rural children were simply not considered important enough. In addition, the re-

gions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy did not have the same economic and strategic weight for the Belgian nation-state that Polish Upper Silesia did for Poland. Whereas the Polish government established a Pedagogical Institute in Katowice in order to educate a suitable new labour force for the country's most important industrial centre, Belgian statesmen did not come up with a similar idea precisely because they did not care enough about the future of the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy within Belgium. Moreover, because the Catholic Church had a free hand over the pedagogical approach in Catholic schools and was, on the whole, rather negatively disposed towards reform pedagogy, and all schools in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy at the time were Catholic, it was more difficult for reform pedagogues to get a foot on the ground than in Poland.

The cases of two local teachers will serve to illustrate the differences between the styles of teaching and learning in Polish Upper Silesia and in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy. Like a majority of the teachers in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy at the time, they were trained at Belgian seminars to be German-speaking teachers. The first teacher taught the ten-year-old boy Karl Pitz in Eupen. One afternoon in June 1936, Karl returned home from school with his homework, as he had not been able to finish his exercises in school. Karl sat down and, together with his father Heinrich, continued to work until 7.30 pm.¹⁴² Heinrich Pitz sent a letter to Karl's teacher, asking whether the exercises his son needed to do were in accordance with the teaching programme. Perhaps he had heard of the Belgian educational reform, which had been printed in a Ministerial Order on 13 May 1936. When he did not receive a reply, Heinrich went to see the mayor of Eupen. The mayor asked school principal Léon Wintgens, a local inhabitant who had received a Belgian teaching education and had been appointed by Herman Baltia, for his and Karl's teacher's opinion.¹⁴³

The dispute about Karl's mathematics homework took place at a time when only one of the special measures for education that Baltia had implemented in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy was still in force. Children attending the two highest years of the German language curriculum were advised to repeat their mathematics exercises in French at the end of the school year.¹⁴⁴ Karl's father sent his letter at the end of the school year, when pupils were repeating the school material. A crucial question the letter hinted at was whether Karl was repeating these exercises in French or German: as Karl was attending the fourth grade, he should have been receiving them in German. To that purpose, at the behest of the Eupen city council, a mathematics book had been translated from French into German in 1931, but by the time Karl was in fourth grade, it had already sold out and no reprints had been ordered.¹⁴⁵

The mayor knew Wintgens was responsible for allocating the mathematics content of the Belgian teaching programme over the course of the school year. Issued in 1922, that programme had already been criticised for being especially demanding in the third and fourth grades. Only a few years earlier, teachers from the other primary school in Eupen had presented the fourth-grade mathematics test questions to the mayor: 'A hall which is 6.85 m long, 5.35 m wide and 3.80 m high is to be paved. How expensive is the work when the cost of detergent for 1 m² is 0.85 Belgian francs and that for the ceiling 1.70 Belgian francs?'¹⁴⁶ Wintgens replied to Heinrich Pilz that all the tasks his son Karl was being asked to perform conformed to the teaching programme. There should be no doubt that when a pupil had 'bad habits', school teachers had to react. Karl was simply a 'dawdler'.¹⁴⁷ The problem was Karl's attitude, not the learning content or pedagogical approach. Wintgens' answer illustrates that ideas from reform pedagogy could not be agreed upon. The individualism Heinrich Pilz asked for, and which the Belgian 1936 curriculum reform programme also proposed, was perceived to impede collective education.¹⁴⁸ Wintgens believed that feelings of duty could only be triggered by the belief in God as the highest supernatural personal legislator.¹⁴⁹ This was so important that Wintgens did not even feel the need to mention whether Karl was taught his mathematics in German or French. Because it was felt that styles of teaching and learning ought not to be questioned, we know so little about the language learning practices of borderland pupils in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmédy.

The Catholic interpretation of childhood that Wintgens displayed in his letter enjoyed considerable support in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmédy. When in 1932 tribute was paid to the old rhetoric of Belgium's nineteenth-century School Wars (namely, that the 'soul of the child' needed to be saved because the Socialist and Liberal parties did not want to extend state subsidies to Catholic schools), voters were for the first time receptive to an internal Belgian political problem. Beforehand, the main topic during election campaigns had always been the contested switch of sovereignty, but now voters' priorities were finally starting to widen. Supporting the electoral campaign of the local Catholic political party, the Katholische Union, the local newspaper *Grenz-Echo* hooted: 'Show the men in order that they are, first and foremost, a shield and protection of the Catholic religion and customs, of Catholic schools and a Catholic education, the protection of youth.'¹⁵⁰ The result was electoral success for the local Catholic party and a drop in support for revisionist parties to 63 per cent.

Nevertheless, teaching in a Catholic borderland school in Belgium could look different. Klara Kirch, a local teacher from the village of Büllingen

(in the region of Malmedy), taught the highest class for girls in a Catholic primary school. In the 1933–1934 school year, she collected pupils' essays in a 'special booklet for the highest class'.¹⁵¹ Published transcripts from the booklet are the only remaining source in which borderland pupils described what their everyday lives looked like. In 'At the Railway Station', Anni was excited to take a local train ride with her sister to the neighbouring village of Weywertz without their parents. In 'The Knife-grinder', Regina watched how a man visiting her village sharpened her mother's scissors. And in 'Herding Cattle', Maria described losing some of her aunt's cows she had been asked to watch because she hadn't been paying enough attention.¹⁵² Describing their authors' individual experiences and their relationship with their close social environment, these texts are imbued with the spirit of the future Belgian educational reform of 1936, despite that reform being dismissed as secular in Catholic circles. To conclude, the vagueness with which pedagogical reforms had been formulated in order to guarantee a separation of church and state created a social environment in which both Catholic dogmatism and Klara Kirch's regionalist initiative were possible. Depending on the ethos of the school, a child's individuality could be either negated or centralised.

German Transnationalism

Throughout the chapter, it has been demonstrated how being a borderland pupil in the 1930s continued to be different from growing up in the mainland, despite the initiatives of Polish and Belgian policymakers to establish universal language learning conditions in primary education. However, people living in Germany found in both Polish Upper Silesia and in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy a similarly successful strategy to support borderland pupils in their language learning process. State officials and citizens in Germany offered material support to children living on the other side of the border, because they considered them to be part of the same German nation. This German (trans)nationalism influenced the systems of power applicable to Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy in the 1930s in similar ways. By providing the best educational support Germany had to offer, it managed to seriously challenge its Polish and Belgian competitors.

Polish Upper Silesia

In Polish Upper Silesia, German and Polish nationalists competed to put up landmarks that would demonstrate their progressive beliefs. They

both used child policy as a weapon in the symbolic battle of modernity. In the early 1930s, for example, the German-speaking private school of Koszęcin received a new school building paid for with German taxpayers' money.¹⁵³ Owing to the German Empire's failure to build a sufficient number of schools in Silesia, and the demographic boom in Polish Upper Silesia in the interwar years, there was an urgent need for school buildings.¹⁵⁴ German authorities explained their ambitious project to build sixty-three schools in Polish Upper Silesia as 'a preparation for a future recovery of the territory'.¹⁵⁵ Developed by progressive Berlin architects, school buildings were to function as the pulsing heart of social life:¹⁵⁶

The private school should not only serve school teaching. The building is at the same time a home for institutions for young people who are not yet obliged to attend school, as well as for those who have left school, as well as for all other institutions of free education and training. It is therefore necessary to create rooms for kindergartens and household courses, and to make room for gymnastics and sporting activities.¹⁵⁷

In the end, eleven school buildings were built in Polish Upper Silesia, including the building for the German-speaking private school of Koszęcin. That new building became a thorn in the side of some local inhabitants, who 'demolished' the windows of the apartment of the school principal and decorated the walls 'with hostile inscriptions'.¹⁵⁸ Silesian authorities reacted to the furore by erecting their own school buildings.¹⁵⁹ In Katowice, the process of leaving a national signature on the landscape had already begun with the erection of a megalomaniacal Voivodeship Government Building (Gmach Urzędu Wojewódzkiego), a humanities academy (Dom Oświaty), and an Administration Office Building (Gmach Urzędów Niezespólnych). Building schools in the countryside was the primary means of giving the more remote districts in the Voivodeship a Polish face.¹⁶⁰ In Koszęcin, a new building for the state-funded Polish-speaking primary school was finished one year after the private German-speaking school had been built, and was situated one street farther away.¹⁶¹ Polish nationalists considered their schools spaces of wider social and national relevance. In 1929, for example, a father enrolling his son at the Polish language branch of the Lubliniec school was fined for writing Stefan instead of Szczepań.¹⁶² He did that at the very moment when the Lubliniec district's bulletin called upon people to change the spelling of their Christian and family names from German to Polish: 'In our own country we should write as we are really called . . . Whoever has no time to apply can ask the teacher of his child for an application form to change his name. Children will be grateful to him, and Poland will as well.'¹⁶³

The Regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy

In the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, German material support found another way to cross the border. These regions had no need for school buildings, demographic growth in the interwar years was more moderate than in Polish Upper Silesia, and no school institutions without Belgian state subsidies were operative during the interwar period. In 1933, however, an action was launched that had a similar logic to the school building initiative in Polish Upper Silesia.¹⁶⁴ Aiming to outdo Lousberg's locally produced alphabet book, Wilhelm Benker, a German citizen born in Malmedy who had migrated to Germany in the aftermath of the First World War, and a member of the VDA, asked German publishing houses to donate fairy-tale books, with lots of beautiful coloured pictures, which he then sent in packages over the border.¹⁶⁵ Teachers offered these books as prizes to their pupils during German language courses.¹⁶⁶ In other cases, the books were distributed at Saint Nicholas parties. Such children's parties belonged to the rare social spaces where people with different political opinions came together: 'There was joy and jubilation. There was no shortage of humour either, with both the youngsters and their parents participating. I must say, we, the old, felt young again. It was a family festival in the true sense of the word. Even the Unionists [people in favour of the integration of the borderlands within Belgium], our "friends", came with their children.'¹⁶⁷

The transports of fairy-tale books ended in 1937, when border guards demanded that the donated books be sent with a receipt. Over the course of five years, approximately 3,000 books had been provided; on average, every family in the regions of Sankt Vith and Malmedy had received at least one.¹⁶⁸ As well as the material and cultural benefits German citizens contributed beyond their state border lines, however, children in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy also experienced National Socialism in a more extreme way than children in Germany. Roman Catholic priests condemned for paedophilia started to cross the state border line from Germany to the regions of Eupen and Sankt Vith in the second half of the 1930s, and these men became involved in providing religious services and teaching religion in local primary schools. It is impossible today to find decisive empirical evidence for their paedophilic activities, as the German regime at the time was hostile towards religion and may not have worried unduly about giving these priests a fair trial. Sources in the regions of Eupen and Sankt Vith did not clearly report paedophilia either, although some hinted at it.¹⁶⁹ There was no such trend of migration in Polish Upper Silesia, because the priests held German citizenship and were therefore not allowed to teach.

Radicalisation on the Brink of the Second World War

The borderlands under study experienced a subsequent change in systems of power in the late 1930s. In Polish Upper Silesia, the Geneva Convention was phased out in 1937 and replaced by a Polish-German agreement pledging 'mutual respect'.¹⁷⁰ However, the ex-colonels that had come to rule Poland after the death of Józef Piłsudski in 1935 removed the last autonomy Polish Upper Silesia had enjoyed in education.¹⁷¹ In 1939, all Catholic schools were renamed public primary schools, while Protestant believers and Jews were also restricted in their opportunities to develop religious educational activities.¹⁷² Polish authorities no longer gave the guardians of children the right to choose a school, but made it the decision of 'the will of Polish society, which will condemn once and for all those who are traitors of the national cause'.¹⁷³ Language exams continued to be organised, but German-speaking representatives no longer had the right to take part in the evaluation process.¹⁷⁴ Representatives of the German national minority raised the issue in the Polish Senate and with Polish Prime Minister Felicjan Sławoj-Składkowski, but were unable to widen the composition of the exam committee to include members of the German national minority.¹⁷⁵ As a consequence, the success rate dropped considerably. During the first round, only 62 per cent of the children passed their exam.¹⁷⁶ The language test of seven-year-old Anna Kowalska was as follows:

Erzähle was von deinen Geschwistern.	Tell us about your siblings.
uśmiecha się.	She laughs.
Erzähle was von deinen Eltern.	Tell us about your parents.
Was hast du Morgen gegessen?	What did you eat this morning?
odpowiada wyrazami.	She answers only with single words.
Erzähle uns was von Bilde.	Tell us about this drawing.
odpowiada błędnym zdaniem.	She answers with an incorrect sentence. ¹⁷⁷

The girl failed the exam. But perhaps Anna was confused because one of the questions asked to test her knowledge of German contained a language mistake. 'Was hast du Morgen gegessen?' is not standard German, and should have been 'Was hast du heute gegessen?' or 'Was isst du morgens?' Or perhaps Anna failed because she felt uncomfortable? Clearly, the examiners did not organise the exam according to a child-centred approach. The exam protocol shows how little influence the scientific studies on the language learning conditions of borderland pupils had under an authoritarian regime when state institutions and social life were becoming increasingly militarised.¹⁷⁸ With no supranational organ to appeal to,

a majority of the guardians of pupils who had failed their exams either approached Silesian authorities, who allowed 370 children to retake the exam, upon which the examiners let 61 children pass, or knocked on the door of the Highest Administrative Court (*Najwyższy Trybunał Administracyjny*) to question the legitimacy of the exams, where they were left in the cold. A year later, the children who had failed the exams were not allowed to retake them.¹⁷⁹ According to eyewitness Jan Myrcik, language tests remained an inadequate means of separating children in Polish Upper Silesia according to their language abilities. He remembered how in 1938 he and his friends from the public Polish-speaking school in Koszęcin and from the private German-speaking school situated one street further away used to play together in the streets: 'those who went to the minority school did not speak better German than we did, not at all'.¹⁸⁰

All these measures, as well as the new regulation that forbade pupils to attend German-speaking primary schools further than three kilometres from their homes, caused the number of pupils in the German-speaking private school of Koszęcin to fall for the first time in the interwar period.¹⁸¹ The school's functioning also became increasingly hampered by the Polish authorities' decision to forbid a further import of German textbooks, out of a concern that they were proliferating National Socialist ideology, and their demand that teachers sign an oath of loyalty at the beginning of the 1938–1939 school year.¹⁸² However, the school continued to be attractive, not least because of the financial support parents received from its owner, the Prince of Hohenlohe. Jan Popielas's appeal to the School Inspectorate of Lubliniec reveals how he considered sending his daughter to the school as an alternative source of welfare: '[I will be left] in an impossible situation because I and my children want to eat, and please answer me promptly, because, if I am refused, I will have to ask the Ministry of Social Welfare to settle the case.'¹⁸³

In the same vein, it has been argued that a prevailing motive behind the school boycott in Polish Upper Silesia, when up to 500 children stopped attending primary school in September 1938 after being denied admittance to a German-speaking school, was their unemployed parents' desire to receive financial compensation through a court case.¹⁸⁴ Although the striking children in Polish Upper Silesia never became a mass phenomenon in the years 1937–1939, their cases were meticulously documented in the local German-speaking press as clear signs of the increasing authoritarianism of Polish politics.¹⁸⁵

Whereas in Polish Upper Silesia, Polish statesmen put their efforts into diminishing the number of pupils receiving teaching in German, in Eupen, it was the parents who for the first time indicated that teaching in German was losing some of its appeal. A few months after Hitler had

come to power, Josef Dehottay, a leader in the local Heimatbund in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, spoke with him and agreed to found an organisation with the same structure as the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei – hereinafter NSDAP): the Heimattreue Front (HF).¹⁸⁶ His activities provoked Belgian parliamentarians into voting for a law that allowed for the revocation of a person's Belgian citizenship in 1934. Josef Dehottay's forced exile to Germany a year later caused a great uproar in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy.¹⁸⁷ The activities of revisionist organisations became more politicised when in 1936 the VDA was put under the control of the NSDAP.¹⁸⁸ In order to allay the concerns of borderland inhabitants, Belgian authorities did not do much more than increase the number of troops patrolling the state border line, heighten surveillance, and threaten the revocation of citizenship.¹⁸⁹ Politicians in Brussels had their hands full trying to keep the democratic regime operative after a quarter of the electorate had rejected it in the elections of 1936, and embarking upon a neutral course in international affairs.

In contrast to Polish Upper Silesia, the language learning regulations for pupils in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy did not change. The Belgian state never ceased to give the guardians of borderland pupils the freedom to change schools independently. However, under the influence of, *inter alia*, German war propaganda, borderland inhabitants came to feel a growing need by the late 1930s to bring their practices in line with one of the two juxtaposing nationalist camps. In 1937, nineteen of the 455 pupils attending German-speaking primary schools in Eupen changed to a school in neighbouring Wallonia where more French was on offer.¹⁹⁰

Conclusion

In this chapter, it has been argued that children growing up in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy continued to face language learning conditions which were different from those offered to children growing up elsewhere in, respectively, Poland and Belgium. However, these conditions showed fewer similarities between the two case study borderlands under study than had previously been the case. Whereas chapter four showed major similarities in the dynamics of human territorialities in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, in this chapter, it was mainly the differences that came to the fore. Owing to the diminished role of supranational control over the treatment of national minorities, decisions made at a national

level proved most important for the conditions of language learning of borderland pupils. Although they intended to offer children a universal childhood, the new educational laws and initiatives in reform pedagogy launched in Poland and Belgium were different, and worked out differently, in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy.

While Polish national authorities chose the power strategy of control over the organisation of primary education, thereby provoking a repeat of the battle over human territoriality in Polish Upper Silesia, they also decided to work along the fourth face of power in order to steer the behaviour of children in Poland, which transformed Polish Upper Silesia into a laboratory of reform pedagogical experiments and studies. Since Silesian children were characterised as being hindered from playing a constructive role in the new Polish nation-state, they were encouraged to work together at school, which, as the school journal *The Young Citizen* showed, did not lead to significant results. Desirous of bringing about a universal childhood for Silesian children, local teachers, moreover, remained divided in their opinions on how progressive that childhood needed to be. Belgian statesmen, on the other hand, issued legislation that, albeit unintentionally, prevented a repeat of the language learning conflicts over social space that had taken place in Eupen at the end of the 1920s. However, the new legislation also continued to give the Roman Catholic Church, which opposed reform pedagogy, a free hand in styles of teaching and learning, and respected the freedom of guardians to choose in which language their children were to receive primary education.

What borderland pupils in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy did have in common in the 1930s was that they became an object of interest for people in Germany, who were convinced they belonged to the same *Volk*. Given Germany's rich history in pedagogy and its size, it required no great effort to assemble the manpower needed to detect the weak points in the Polish and Belgian educational policies. Strategies were developed to outdo their neighbours by means of material support: mainly school buildings, in the case of Polish Upper Silesia, and fairy-tale books, in the case of the regions of Sankt Vith and Malmedy.

The borderlands also became increasingly caught up in geopolitical strategies regarding the future re-division of the European continent, which significantly relativised the importance of educational laws and reform pedagogical initiatives. By the end of the 1930s, scientific publications on styles of teaching and learning had no chance of kindling the social revolution Sanacja supporters had envisaged in the early 1930s, when, after the phasing out of the Geneva Convention, it was decided that

the 'will of the Polish society',¹⁹¹ instead of a borderland child's guardian, would determine language learning conditions in primary schools (which Polish statesmen could get away with largely owing to the burgeoning fear of German aggression). Similarly, the fact that the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were treated as potential currency to pay off the security of the Belgian mainland meant that Belgian authorities had also become as good as indifferent towards the language learning of its borderland pupils.

Notes

1. *Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child*.
2. Janusz Korczak, as quoted in Eichsteller, 'Janus Korczak', 385–86.
3. Brzoza and Sowa, *Historia Polski*, 375.
4. de Vroede, 'Language in Education', 125.
5. Librachowa, 'Cechy umysłowości', 98.
6. Musil, *Der Mann*, 16.
7. Kocka and Haupt, 'Introduction', 4.
8. Depaepe and Simon, 'De Vlaamse jeugd', 311.
9. Gerard, 'De democratie gedroomd', 957.
10. Depaepe, de Vroede and Simon, '1936 Curriculum Reform', 371.
11. Fink, *Defending*, 334.
12. Borodziej, *Geschichte Polens*, 187–88.
13. Cull, 'Anti-Semitism', 14.
14. Michalczyk, *Heimat*, 55.
15. Luther, *Volkstumspolitik*, 241.
16. Timmermann, *Zur nationalen Integration*, 241.
17. Allinson, *Germany and Austria*, 89.
18. Claude, *National Minorities*, 30.
19. Lentz, *Nazi Foreign Policy*, 67.
20. Eser, 'Volk, Staat, Gott!', 436.
21. Borodziej, *Geschichte Polens*, 186.
22. *Ibid.*, 187.
23. Brzoza and Sowa, *Historia Polski*, 487.
24. Duroselle, *France*, 100–4.
25. Klefisch, *Dritte Reich*, 436; Gerard, 'De democratie gedroomd', 1030.
26. Klefisch, *Dritte Reich*, 130–31 and 434.
27. Gerard, 'De democratie gedroomd', 1040–42; Hyde, 'Belgium and Neutrality', 82.
28. Gerard, 'De democratie gedroomd', 1085.
29. Klefisch, *Dritte Reich*, 114.
30. *Ibid.*, 126.
31. Dolderer, 'Der flämische Nationalismus', 109–36.
32. Kartheuser, *Les années 30 à Eupen-Malmedy*, 108; Marcuse, 'Dollar-to-Marks'.
33. Brüll, 'Eupen-Malmedy 1918–1945', 7–38.
34. BAK, NL, 174, 24, unpaginated (April 1934).

35. AD, 11.047, 574, unpagged (Légation belge, Count de Kerckhove de Denterghem to Paul Hymans, 14 January 1935).
36. Lentz, *Wahlverhalten*, 333–34.
37. Osiński, *Janusz Jędrzejewicz*.
38. Zloch, *Polnischer Nationalismus*, vol. 78, 296.
39. Heike, *Die deutsche Minderheit in Polen*, 318–19.
40. Eser, 'Volk, Staat, Gott!', 529; Zloch, *Polnischer Nationalismus*, vol. 78, 353.
41. APK, 27/200F, 30 (Instrukcja dotycząca programu nauki w oddziale I publicznych szkół powszechnych i zmian w programach nauki w oddziale V i VI publicznych szkół powszechnych, 14 September 1932).
42. *Ibid.*, 30.
43. *Ibid.*, 20 (Okólnik Nr. 17 w sprawie zmian w okólniku Nr. 6 z dnia 25. V. 1932 r., Katowice, 29 August 1932); *ibid.*, 30 (Instrukcja programu nauki w oddziale I publicznych szkół powszechnych i zmian w programach nauki w oddziale V i VI publicznych szkół powszechnych, 14 September 1932).
44. Osiński, *Janusz Jędrzejewicz*, 197.
45. Jędrzejczak, 'Recepcja', 452.
46. Glimos-Nadgórska, *Polskie szkolnictwo*, 112; Wanatowicz, *Ludność napływowa*, 245.
47. Glimos-Nadgórska, *Polskie szkolnictwo*, 112; Górski, 'Organizacja', 75; APK 27, 200F, 354 ('Ślask złączony z Macierzą musi mieć jednolity z Polską ustrój szkolny', *Polska Zachodnia*, 12 March 1933); 'Niebezpieczne objawy w szkolnictwie ślaskiem', *Gość Niedzielny*, 1933, vol. 11, 1, 3–5.
48. Borodziej, *Geschichte Polens*, 174.
49. Prażmowska, *Poland*, 124.
50. Raffestin, 'Space', 136–38.
51. APK, 1363/412, 42 (Inspektorat Szkolny w Lublińcu do Starostwa, Lubliniec, 20 May 1936); *ibid.*, 59 (Starostwo lublinieckie do Urzędu Gminnego w Cieszowej, Lubliniec, 27 May 1936); *ibid.*, 61 (Starostwo lublinieckie do Urzędu Gminnego w Boronowie, Lubliniec, 27 May 1936); Archiwum Akt Nowych (AAN), MSZ, 2325, 270 (Wyniki egzaminów dzieci przeniesionych do szkół mniejszościowych w roku 1936).
52. Korowicz, *Górnośląska ochrona Mniejszości*, 185.
53. AAN, MSZ, 2325, 268 (Urząd Wojewódzki Śląski Wyd. Oświec. Publ. do Pana Prezydenta Komisji Mieszanej dla Spraw Górnego Śląska w Katowicach, Katowice 19 September 1936); *ibid.*, 275 (Inspektorat szkolny Lubliniec, Egzamin językowy, September 1936).
54. Fałęcki, *Niemieckie szkolnictwo mniejszościowe*, 109 and 161.
55. BABL, R 8043/642, unpagged (Deutsche Stiftung an den Herrn Reichsminister der Finanzen Berlin, 2 November 1934); DSHI, Sammlung Jendrike, 10_080, fol. 80r–81v (Franz Chmiel Formular, Gleidingen 12 May 1957); ASPL, School Chronicle, vol. 1, 277 (Polonia, *O szkołach mniejszości w Lublinieckiem*).
56. BABL, R 8043/642 (Deutsche Stiftung an den Herrn Reichsminister der Finanzen Berlin, 2 November 1934); APK, 1363/406, 1 (Spis szkół powszechnych okręgu szkolnego Lubliniec, 1935); APK, 1363/413, 8 (Znaczenie wpisów wobec wygasania Konwencji Genewskiej i sposoby ich przeprowadzenia, 1937).
57. Statistical data from 1934/35 shows that 84 per cent of primary schools offered teaching in Polish, 11.28 per cent in Ukrainian, 1.64 per cent in German and 0.3 per cent in Hebrew or Yiddish (*Mały Rocznik Statystyczny*, 1936, 228–29); Tomiak, 'Education', 205.
58. Eser, 'Volk, Staat, Gott!', 268 and 274.
59. In the public primary school of Lubliniec, in the 1934–1935 school year, 710 pupils attended the eight-year curriculum, and 663 the seven-year curriculum (APK, 1363/406,

- 1; ASPL, School Chronicle, vol. 2, 5–6 [Szkoły i przedszkola w Lublińcu, Lubliniec, 16 August 1936]).
60. Pabst, 'Eupen-Malmedy', 349. See also SE, 666/55/216, unpagued (*Die Unterrichtssprache in den Volksschulen, Eupener Zeitung*, 104, 32, 07/02/1930).
61. *Dziennik Ustaw*, 1932, Pozycja, 389, 640; *Gość Niedzielny*, 'O zaufanie do szkoły polskiej na Śląsku', 1936, vol. 14, 15, 202.
62. Glimos-Nadgórska, *Polskie szkolnictwo*, 63.
63. Eser, 'Volk, Staat, Gott!', 254–59.
64. AAN, MSZ, 2330, 185 (Urząd Wojewódzki Śląski do Alojzego Kloze, Katowice, 14 December 1927); Iwanicki, *Polityka oświatowa*, 164ff.; Eser, 'Volk, Staat, Gott!', 560.
65. APK, 27, 200F, 354 ('Śląsk złączony z Macierzą musi mieć jednolity z Polską ustrój szkolny', *Polska Zachodnia*, 12 March 1933); polemical articles 'Niebezpieczne objawy w szkolnictwie slaskiem', *Gość Niedzielny*, 1933, vol. 11, 1, 3–5.
66. Osiński, *Janusz Jędrzejewicz*, 197.
67. Documentatie- en Onderzoekscentrum voor Religie, Cultuur en Samenleving, KU Leuven (KADOC), BE, 942855/1595/310, 1–20 (Dossier betreffende de wet van 14 juli houdende taalregeling in het lager en middelbaar onderwijs, 1929–33).
68. Schmidt, 'Sprachnationale Konflikte', 407; *De Volksgazet*, Craeybeckx, F.F.L., 'Waarom zijn er geen Vlaamsche scholen in het Walenland? - Of de ouders er vragen', 16 October 1929, 1.
69. de Vroede, 'Language in Education', 128.
70. Mallinson, *Power*, 131.
71. de Vroede, 'Language in Education', 128.
72. Timmermann, *Zur nationalen Integration*, 234.
73. Primary schools in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy continued to enjoy the right to start foreign language training in either the third or fifth year of the school curriculum (Lejeune, 'Abtretung', 234. See also Timmermann, *Zur nationalen Integration*, 234).
74. Fittbogen, *Schulrecht*, 29.
75. Landesverband Rheinland (LVR), 4745, unpagued (Zusammenstellung ueber die derzeitige Lage im Volksschulwesen der drei Kantone Eupen, Malmedy und Sankt Vith, 1938).
76. Ewert, 'Eric Stern', 200.
77. *Ibid.*, 207; Burgdörfer, *Volk ohne Jugend*.
78. de Vroede, 'Language in Education', 128.
79. Piaget, 'Polska reforma'. See Sobczak, *Nowe wychowanie*, 75.
80. Jędrzejewicz, 'Współczesne zagadnienia wychowawcze', 10.
81. Seweryn, 'Zagadnienia', vol. 7, 9; Drynda, 'Niektóre koncepcje', 27; Jaxa-Bykowski, 'Zagadnienia', 3–43.
82. Ministerstwo Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego, *Program*. For the popularity of regionalism in interwar Europe, see Storm, *The Culture of Regionalism*, 11.
83. Wnęk, *Dziecko w polskiej literaturze naukowej*, 64–67.
84. Mysłakowski, *Państwo*; the quotations are from Mysłakowski, 'Przedmowa', X.
85. These research publications do not systematically indicate which children of the Voivodeship were investigated. Only one source clearly covers the Lubliniec district (Młody Obywatel, 1934/35). Some of the studies on Polish Upper Silesia do not specify whether teachers and children in the Lubliniec district were involved (Morcinek, *Miasteczko*), and three explicitly mention not having included the Lubliniec district (Pieter, *Poziom inteligencji*; Michna, 'Obserwacje'; Sobolski, *Dziecko wsi śląskiej*), of which two argue their findings are representative for the whole of Polish Upper Silesia (Pieter,

- Poziom inteligencji*; Sobolski, *Dziecko wsi śląskiej*). While the first study appeared in 1931 and the last one in 1938, I discuss them both in this section because they belong together thematically.
86. This phenomenon was also characteristic of scientific initiatives on childhood elsewhere in Poland (Wnęk, *Dziecko w polskiej literaturze naukowej*, 359).
 87. Z. Gryń, 'Stosunek dziecka do nauki w świetle ankiety', *Miesięcznik Pedagogiczny*, vol. 44, 3, 1935, 73.
 88. Librachowa and Studencki, *Dziecko wsi polskiej*.
 89. Bode and Fuchs, *Psychologie*; Scheufgen, *Seelenleben*; Librachowa and Studencki, 'Słowo', 7.
 90. Librachowa and Studencki, 'Słowo', 14–15.
 91. Sobolski, *Dziecko wsi śląskiej*, 5; Librachowa and Studencki's edited volume included one other characterisation of a Silesian child, but it spoke solely of children growing up in urbanised mining areas, and is therefore not applicable to the living conditions in the Lubliniec district (Chmielewski, 'Dziecko śląskie').
 92. Sobolski, *Dziecko wsi śląskiej*, 6.
 93. Ibid.
 94. Librachowa, 'Cechy umysłowości', 90.
 95. Sobolski, *Dziecko wsi śląskiej*, 8.
 96. Librachowa, 'Charakterystyka', 24–25.
 97. Librachowa, 'Cechy umysłowości', 98.
 98. Ibid., 99.
 99. Szczepański, 'Przejście', 297–307.
 100. Kojkoł, *Polska*, 134.
 101. Michna, 'Obserwacje', 187.
 102. Le Play, *Instruction*; Descamps, *Les trois formes*.
 103. Mysłakowski, 'Rodzina', 14.
 104. Michna, 'Obserwacje', 112.
 105. Ibid., 104.
 106. Płatek, 'Wież jako środowisko wychowawcze', 54.
 107. Michna, 'Obserwacje', 144.
 108. Mysłakowski, 'Przedmowa', IX.
 109. Kojkoł, *Polska*, 142.
 110. Michna, 'Obserwacje', 187.
 111. Ibid., 122.
 112. Mysłakowski's edited volume contains one other essay written by a Silesian teacher, mostly speaking about his experiences as a Polish teacher in German Upper Silesia (Siwoń, 'Rodzina wiejska').
 113. Pieter, *Poziom inteligencji*, 3.
 114. Grzywak-Kaczyńska, *Testy i normy*; Terman, *The Measurement of Intelligence*.
 115. Pieter, *Poziom inteligencji*, 4.
 116. Ibid., 70–76.
 117. Ibid., 48.
 118. Ibid., 78.
 119. Szczęśniak, 'Z zapisków', 74.
 120. Morcinek, *Gołbie na dachu*; Morcinek, *W najmłodszym lesie*; Morcinek, *Miasteczko*.
 121. Szczęśniak, 'Z zapisków', 77.
 122. Ibid., 78.
 123. In Polish Upper Silesia, forty-seven school journals were published throughout the interwar period, of which four came from primary schools. *The Young Citizen* is one of

- them (Synowiec, *Śląskie czasopisma szkolne*, 11). In 1934, seven booklets, each containing between fourteen and eighteen pages, were published. In 1935, at least six booklets were printed (Przywecka-Samecka and Reiter, *Bibliografia*, 75; Paczkowski, *Prasa polska*, 299).
124. 'Okólnik Ministerstwa Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego do kuratorów Okęgów Szkolnych w sprawie wydawnictw szkolnych', *Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego*, 1927, 10, 13 (191), 484–85.
 125. *Młody Obywatel*, 1934, vol. 1, 1, 2; Prażmowska, *Poland*, 65 and 86.
 126. 'Czego żąda Pan Minister Oświaty od dziatwy szkół powszechnych?', *Młody Obywatel*, 1934, vol. 1, 5/6, 13.
 127. K. Gotzówna, 'W 16-lecie odzyskania niepodległości', *Młody Obywatel*, 1934, vol. 1, 5/6, 6–7. Primary school textbooks also described Piłsudski's childhood at great length and referred to him as *Ziuk* (Wojtas, 'Learning to Become Polish', 230).
 128. Chwałba, *Legiony*, 252–53.
 129. Hein, *Pilsudski-Kult*.
 130. See also Zloch, *Polnischer Nationalismus*, vol. 78, 357.
 131. Linek, 'Zmiany', 42ff.; Kaczmarek, 'Zwischen Regionalismus', 174. Textbook writer Jan Żebrok followed suit. He explained that his Polish language textbooks had, in fact, a regional character (J. Żebrok, 'Znowu zapowiada się bałagan czytankowy', *Ogniskowiec*, 1932, 12, 14). For a critique on Żebrok's handbook, see J. Paszenda, 'O miejsce piewców śląskich w śląskiej szkole', *Szkoła Śląska*, 10, 1929, 12.
 132. *Młody Obywatel*, 1935, vol. 2, 4, 7. See also J. Jakubowski, 'Uwagi o celach pracy krakoznawczej w szkole śląskiej', *Młody krajoznawca Śląski*, vol. 3, 19, 9–11; P. Karol, 'Kościół parafalny w Sadowie', *Młody Obywatel*, vol. 2, 4, 7; Novikov, *Shades*, 118.
 133. 'Teraz chodzi o czyny!', *Gość Niedzielny*, 1936, vol. 14, 21, 289; 'Czerwony "Płomyk": Gość Niedzielny, Niebezpieczna propaganda w szkole', 1936, vol. 14, 12, 153–54.
 134. In the Lubliniec district, 50 per cent of the teachers belonged to the Polish Teachers Association, compared to an average 55 per cent in the Silesian Voivodeship, 39 per cent of the teachers belonged to the Association of Christian-National Teachers of General Schools (Stowarzyszenie Chrześcijańsko-Narodowe Nauczycielstwa Szkół Powszechnych – SCNNSP), compared to an average of only 20 per cent in the Silesian Voivodeship, and 11 per cent of teachers did not belong to any teachers' organisation, compared to 25 per cent in the Silesian Voivodeship (Dziwoki, *Kościół katolicki*, 49).
 135. See for example *Młody Obywatel*, 1935, vol. 2, 4, 17.
 136. Depaepe, de Vroede and Simon, '1936 Curriculum Reform'.
 137. Ministerieele orderichting van 15 juni 1935, *Leerplan*, 24.
 138. Depaepe, de Vroede and Simon, '1936 Curriculum Reform', 372.
 139. *Ibid.*, 379–80.
 140. Depaepe, *Order in Progress*, 105.
 141. Lejeune, 'Von Tafel', 27–38.
 142. SE, 661/55/168, unpagged (An Herrn Lehrer Gerken, Eupen, 18 June 1936).
 143. Massenau, 'Blick auf das Schulwesen', 11.
 144. Fittbogen, *Schulrecht*, 146.
 145. SE, 657/55/147, unpagged (Arel/Arlon. An die Gemeindeverwaltung, Eupen, 15 May 1929); Braçonnier, *Cours d'arithmétique théorique et pratique*; SE, 657/55/147, unpagged (Der Stadtsekretär und der Bürgermeister an Schulinspektor Lousberg, Eupen, 14 April 1932); SE, 655/55/138, unpagged (Aufstellung der Bestellungen für das Schuljahr 1935–36).
 146. SE, 55/122, unpagged (Anlage, 1924).
 147. SE, 661/55/168, unpagged (Wintgens an Herrn Bürgermeister, Eupen, 2 July 1936).

148. Depaeppe, de Vroede and Simon, '1936 Curriculum Reform', 373.
149. See also *Sankt Vither Zeitung*, 30 July 1924.
150. 'In den Kampf', *Grenz-Echo*, 1932, vol. 29/30, 10, 2. See also Tyssens, *Om de schone ziel*, 113; Havenith, *Belgienbild*, 133; Lejeune, *Die Säuberung*, 37.
151. Lehrpersonen und Elternrat der Gemeindeschule Büllingen, *145 Jahre*, 77–78.
152. Ibid.
153. APK, 1363/410, 9 (Koncesja, Katowice, 25 January 1934).
154. Rimmele, *Sprachenpolitik*, 104–5.
155. PAAAB, R 60610, 104 (Schreiben des Rechnungshofes des Deutschen Reiches an das Auswärtige Amt, 15 March 1937); BABL, DS, 643, unpaged (Krahmer-Möllenbergs an Steinacher 4 December 1934).
156. Fałęcki, *Niemieckie szkolnictwo mniejszościowe*, 97.
157. BABL, DS, 651, 188 (Ulitz, Sroka, Bauprogramm für Polnisch-Oberschlesien, February 1930).
158. DSHI, Sammlung Jendrike, 10_080, fol. 80v (Franz Chmiel Formular, Gleidingen 12 May 1957).
159. Glimos-Nadgórska, *Polskie szkolnictwo*, 44–45 and 52.
160. Polak-Springer, *Recovered*, 95.
161. Olszówka, 'Szkolnictwo polskie', 21.
162. APK 1376/1269, 365 (W sprawie ucznia Szczepana Jana Wicharego /'Kandzi'/ do Miejskiego Urzędu Policyjnego w Lublińcu, Lubliniec, 11 April 1929).
163. A. Jesionowski, 'W ważnej sprawie narodowej. (O odniemczaniu nazwisk polskich)', *Tygodnik powiatowy na powiat lubliniecki*, 1930, 2, 3.
164. BAK, ZSG, 104-9, 1 (Vereinigte Buchbindereien an Oberbürgermeister Aachen, Altona Elbe, January 1932).
165. BAK, ZSG, 104-9, 5 (Deutscher Schutzbund an Herrn Stadtsinspektor W. Benker, Berlin, 8 February 1932); *ibid.*, 6 (Deutscher Schutzbund an die Malmedy-Sankt Vither Landmannschaft zu Aachen, Herrn W. Benker, Berlin, 11 February 1932); *ibid.*, 7 (Hans Steinacher an Benker, Berlin, 12 February 1932); *ibid.*, 11 (Henkel Düsseldorf Chemische Produkte an Stadtsinspektor W. Benker, Düsseldorf, 7 June 1932); BAK, ZSG, 104-9, 22 (Fatzau an Benker, Eupen, 8 August 1932).
166. BAK, ZSG, 104-9, 190 (Speditionsfirma 'Carl&Scheins' an Benker, 2 January 1937).
167. BAK, ZSG, 104-9, 76 (Böhlau aus dem Heimatbund Eupen-Malmedy-Sankt Vith an Benker, 28 January 1933).
168. BAK, ZSG, 104-9, 45 (Grenzbücherdienst schickt ein Paket mit 70 Büchern an Benker, 14 October 1932); *ibid.*, 50 (Benker an Regierungspräsident, 28 October 1932); *ibid.*, 81 and 85 (Vereinigte Buchbindereien an Benker, 14 February 1933); *ibid.*, 99 (Vereinigte Buchbindereien an Benker, 29 September 1933).
169. For a detailed discussion, see Lejeune, 'Der ostbelgische Klerus', 135.
170. 'Deklaracje polsko-niemieckie w sprawach mniejszościowych', *Front Zachodni. Pismo poświęcone sprawom wzajemnego stosunku Polski i Niemiec*, vol. 5, 9, November 1937, 1.
171. Prażmowska, *Poland*, 124.
172. Glimos-Nadgórska, *Polskie szkolnictwo*, 106; Czembor, *Ewangelicki Kościół Unijny*, 206–7.
173. APK, 1363/413, 8–9 (Znaczenie wpisów wobec wygasania Konwencji Genewskiej i sposoby ich przeprowadzenia, 1937).
174. AAN, MWRiOP, 164, 90–91 (Wojewoda Śląski do Inspektorów Szkolnych w górnośląskiej części województwa Śląskiego, Katowice, 30 August 1937).
175. Fałęcki, *Niemieckie szkolnictwo mniejszościowe*, 149–50.
176. In total, 1,268 children took the exam, and 731 passed (AAN, MWRiOP, 164, 14, 18 [Ergebnisse der ersten Sprachprüfungen im September 1937]).

177. Most of the documents of the Polish state administration were lost during the Second World War. Among the few documents that are left, we find AAN, MWRiOP, 164, 25 (Urząd Wojewódzki Śląski, Wydział Oświecenia Publicznego do Ministerstwa Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego w Warszawie, Katowice, 3 November 1937, 26).
178. Prażmowska, *Poland*, 124.
179. Fałęcki, *Niemieckie szkolnictwo mniejszościowe*, 136–38.
180. Private Archive of Machteld Venken, Meeting with eyewitnesses in Koszęcin, 7 July 2014, Transcription, [J.M.].
181. BABL, R 8043, 647 (Übersicht über die Kindergärten in Lubliniec, 1939); APK, D. Schulverein 78/24, 46 (Vorläufige Ergebnisse über Einschreibungen und Ueberweisungen in der Zeit von 10–15 May 1937 für das Schuljahr 1937/38 für die privaten Volksschulen des Deutschen Schulvereins).
182. Fałęcki, *Niemieckie szkolnictwo mniejszościowe*, 151–52.
183. APK, Star. Lubl. 1363, t. 413, k. 29. Jan Popielas to Inspektorat Szkolny w Lublińcu, Psary, 26 October 1937.
184. Fałęcki, *Niemieckie szkolnictwo mniejszościowe*, 155–56.
185. 'Es hagelt Schulstrafen, weil deutsche Eltern ihre Kinder nicht in die polnische Schule schicken wollen', *Der Aufbruch*, 63, 1938; 'Schärfere Straffen im Friedenshütten Schulstreit', *Kattowitzer Zeitung*, 62, 17 March 1938. Polish authorities at times confiscated journals for what they saw as their politically inflammatory content. See, for example, *Polska Zachodnia*, 278, 9 October 1937; 'Bezczelne prowokacje germanizatorów. Konfiskata', *Kattowitzer Zeitung*.
186. Cremer, 'Annexion', 9.
187. Cremer and Meißer, *Spuren*, 13; Klefisch, *Dritte Reich*, 101.
188. Lejeune, *Die Deutsch-Belgischen Kulturbeziehungen*, 129–32.
189. O'Connell, 'Left to Their Own Devices', 36; Lejeune, *Die Deutsch-Belgischen Kulturbeziehungen*, 128.
190. SE, 654/55/131, unpagged (Schülerzahl, Schuljahr 1937–38, Eupen, 27 September 1937). The same phenomenon was noticeable within the Belgian army, where inhabitants from the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy could choose between joining a French-speaking or German-speaking war unit. In the late 1930s, they increasingly preferred a French-speaking one (Beck, Brüll and Quadflieg, 'Weltkriege', 150).
191. APK, 1363/413, 8–9 (Znaczenie wpisów wobec wygasania Konwencji Genewskiej i sposoby ich przeprowadzenia, 1937).

CONCLUSION



After the end of the First World War, Europe was mapped out in order to ensure peace. The decision-makers in Paris were guided by their visions of a just Europe and adhered to the vague and contentious principle of self-determination while re-spacing the continent with changed state border lines. However, they were also confronted with civil wars in Central and Eastern Europe that left little room for a supranational imposition of new state border lines. Whereas the League of Nations closely supervised borderland schooling in interwar Central and Eastern Europe, guided by the need to respect the region's diverse range of nationalities, ethnicities and languages, individual nation-states in Western Europe were granted unlimited control over the way in which they organised education. The borderlands upon which the Paris Treaties thrust their imagined notions of a peaceful Europe, but failed to support with an international relief plan, became the places where Europe's interwar order faced its greatest challenges. At a time of growing state involvement over the lives of individuals inhabiting the European continent, with nation-state representatives unambiguously defining their incentives in their measures for future citizens, borderland schools often became essential sites of interwar political struggle where nationalists clashed over the meaning of childhood. As a result, meaning often fragmented and collapsed. This book analysed and compared how language learning policies and practices within the context of the most important child space at the time in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were used to make and scape the border. Following the establishment and implementation of compulsory primary education in Poland and Belgium in 1919, when the primary school was designed to shape a universal space for children, there was considerable policy interest in the language learning conditions for borderland pupils.

A comparative historical methodology based on the selection of two case study borderlands was chosen as a means of discovering similarities

Notes for this chapter begin on page 210.

and differences in the multidimensional and continuously changing dynamics involved in making and scaping the border. The analysis placed the investigation of borderland events and experiences within their national and transnational historical context and searched for linkages between them, thereby identifying a profile indicative of how characteristic a certain event or experience was, irrespective of the actual geographical location of a borderland. Arguing that organising or experiencing primary education as a teacher or pupil in one of the two case study borderlands continued to be significantly different experiences than elsewhere in Poland and Belgium throughout the interwar period, this book has distilled a set of common characteristics that demonstrate how different these experiences were. By means of a newly developed comparative spatiotemporal framework of analysis, composed of three axes – borders and human territoriality, power and multiple loyalties, and microhistory in a multi-layered context – the first profile of borderland schooling was developed. This book showed how crucial an element interwar borderland schooling was in the detaching of both the Polish-German and Belgian-German borderlands from Germany, as well as their integration within, respectively, the interwar Polish and Belgian nation-states. This process was not a teleological one of linear integration, but a relational one of continuous interactions between institutions and historical actors. Interwar borderland schooling in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy had the following four characteristics in common.

First, borderland schools were more dependent on international and transnational changes. To start with, the borderlands changed state sovereignty out of a geopolitical concern for peace, and not as a result of the desires for self-determination of a considerable segment of borderland inhabitants. During the interwar years, changes at the international and transnational levels continued to affect the learning conditions in borderland schools. During the Locarno negotiations in the mid-1920s, which resulted in agreements ensuring the stability of Germany's western state border line, Belgian politicians explored the possibility of selling the border regions of Eupen and Sankt Vith to Germany. This caused confusion among borderland inhabitants about the kind of integration the Belgian state had in mind and undermined the efficacy of educational policies. On the other hand, when Germany left the League of Nations in 1933 and exchanged most of the supranational framework of control over Poland's western borderlands for a bilateral Polish-German agreement, the conditions in the borderland schools of Polish Upper Silesia sharply improved, especially when compared to those in schools for pupils with a mother tongue other than Polish who lived elsewhere in Poland. Moreover, because Germany never lost its interest in the children who had ended up

on the other side of its border following the Treaty of Versailles, an interest that became more pronounced after 1933, borderland pupils received opportunities for cultural development that, given Germany's longer experience with reform pedagogy, could seriously challenge or even surpass Polish and Belgian educational policy measures.

Secondly, special educational policies were a frequent phenomenon in interwar borderlands. Borderland schools often faced language learning policies that were especially developed for them, notwithstanding how differently power manifested itself within a specific borderland region. When power took the form of domination in Eupen-Malmedy, for example, Herman Baltia was able to prohibit free enrolment to the French-speaking school in the German language zone he had installed despite the fact that the Belgian Constitution granted guardians the freedom to choose the language of instruction of their children. In Polish Upper Silesia, on the other hand, a preventive power strategy turned out to have a decisive influence. The Geneva Agreement painstakingly detailed preventive measures for the school enrolment of pupils belonging to what had been constructed as the German national minority. The Pedagogical Institute in Katowice, meanwhile, constitutes an example of how power interrelated with knowledge. The specificities of Silesian styles of teaching and learning were discovered, researched and later influenced in order to underpin the ideology of state upbringing.

Arguing that special educational policies were a frequent phenomenon in interwar borderlands is not the same as saying that educational policies in borderlands were always special, or could not be the same as educational policies implemented in other parts of a country at a particular moment in time. By selecting one example of an identical educational measure in the centre and the periphery and using that example in order to argue that borderland schooling was not different from the schooling provided in other parts of a country, one underplays the dynamics of space and time. The changing borderscape of the geographical and social space affected by the drawing of the state border line could at specific moments include schools located outside of a borderland. In the case of Polish Upper Silesia, these were German-speaking schools in some areas of Western and Northern Poland, as well as schools providing teaching in Yiddish or Hebrew. In the case of the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, these were German-speaking schools in Wallonia and Dutch-speaking schools in Brussels. Following borderland schooling throughout the twenty-year interwar period, however, made it possible to move beyond a presentation of ad hoc examples and indicate the frequency of special educational policies over a longer period.

Third, within the borderlands, (language learning) policy measures were more negotiable. At those moments when power did not manifest itself predominantly through one dimension (whether dominative, such as in Eupen-Malmedy until 1925 and in Polish Upper Silesia since 1937, or preventive, such as in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy after 1932), state institutions and individuals could foreground the abnormalities and contradictions in language learning rules and aim to enlarge them. The borderlands became places where discussions with relevance for wider networks in Poland, Belgium, Germany and the League of Nations took place. Despite the differences in the systems of power that came into being in Polish Upper Silesia and in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, they changed according to similar dynamics. This insight facilitates a reinterpretation of the battle over the existence and access to German-speaking schools in Polish Upper Silesia. Interestingly, within another power constellation and at other levels of decision-making, something similar happened to the children whose guardians proclaimed their mother tongue was French and wanted them to attend the French-speaking school in Eupen.

Finally, borderland schools experienced the excesses within changing systems of power. The interwar borderlands at times turned into places of excess, whether in terms of nationalist control or creative cultural production. The control measures applicable to Eupen-Malmedy perfectly encapsulated the crucial contradictions of the Belgian Kingdom. The Baltia government in the early 1920s was not only a colonial regime but also a transitional one, established with the aim of eventually enabling borderland inhabitants to enjoy all the freedoms of the Belgian Constitution. In addition, unlike anywhere else in Belgium, within eight years of the dissolution of the French-speaking zone Baltia had established, German-speaking children could once again receive most of their primary education in German. In Polish Upper Silesia in the late 1920s, meanwhile, a collective obsessive search to define the mother tongue of individual borderland pupils could not prevent legislation and jurisdiction from being incapable of encompassing normativity. Throughout the 1930s, however, scientists and teachers developed innovative research methodologies in order to provide creative cultural solutions to the challenges of education that were unique in Europe at the time. Efforts were put into typifying a Silesian child, understanding their language learning conditions and improving them.

It ought to be possible to situate the insights into the history of schools in the Polish-German and Belgian-German borderlands offered in this book within a broader European context. Painting an overview of educa-

tional state policies throughout Europe does not enable us to develop an understanding of – let alone compare – the multidimensional and continuously changing dynamics involved in making and scaping borders. It does, however, enable us to evaluate the political strategies of power in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy as harsher or softer forms of domination in comparison to those issued towards German-speaking schools elsewhere in Europe. At one end of the spectrum are nation-states that offered their German-speaking inhabitants a great deal of decision-making power over the organisation and content of language learning. In Estonia, for instance, German-speaking inhabitants could design the contours of primary and secondary education themselves and received public funding both from Estonia and Germany.¹ In Southern Denmark, already from the early 1920s, the situation looked similar to what would be achieved in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy in the second half of the 1930s, the major difference being the establishment of private German-speaking schooling.² And in Czechoslovakia, not only did the German-speaking schools from the Habsburg era situated along its western state border line continue to provide a monolingual education in German, but a new German-speaking school system was also established in regions further east, such as Slovakia and Carpathian Rus.³ At the other end of the spectrum we find nation-states that opted for a strategy of coercive domination, such as Italy and France. It is indeed true that Italian and French state officials did not hesitate to use force in order to demand adherence to their exclusive language learning rules in schools, while at the same time, through their involvement in the League of Nations, prohibiting states in Central and Eastern Europe from doing the same. Both in Southern Tyrol and in the regions of Alsace and Lorraine, German-speaking schools and teaching branches were forbidden in the early 1920s, and whereas French statesmen reopened them by the end of the 1920s, German-speaking schools in fascist Italy could only continue to operate in secret.⁴ The middle of the spectrum is occupied by nation-states where more ambiguity and changes could be observed over the course of time, such as Latvia, Belgium, Poland and Hungary. Latvian politicians began by offering German-speaking inhabitants autonomy in decision-making over the organisation of language learning in German-speaking schools but abruptly ended this autonomy under the regime of Karlis Ulmanis in the 1930s.⁵ Hungarian policies towards German-speaking pupils were more complicated. Whereas a significant part of the German-speaking population identified with the Hungarian state politically, Hungarian political leaders increasingly developed an ethnic understanding of what it meant to be a Hungarian. This was because they wished to include in their image of the nation the many pre-war inhab-

itants of the kingdom who found themselves in neighbouring countries after the signing of the Treaty of Trianon.⁶

While it is possible to display the content of educational policies directed towards inhabitants speaking a minority language in different European countries, comparing their effects is a less straightforward matter. Eriksen and others concluded that the intentions of state officials to use education as the primary tool in order to bring about more homogeneous collective entities within their geographical state border lines led to results that were 'only marginally significant and often even quite contrary to what originally had been intended and expected'.⁷ This book offered a comparative analytical framework in order to dissect and understand the complex interrelationship of transient space, evolving time, power systems and strategies, as well as multiple loyalties, which enabled me to reveal a common profile of borderland schooling that points to the complex, contradictory and continuously changing results of national state policies in two case study borderlands. Rather than situating the findings within the context of a broad panoply of reactions to educational policies in other European borderlands, this conclusion focuses on two specific places in Europe. After the switch in state sovereignty in the aftermath of the First World War, the nation-building process here did not take the form of spreading a single codified language and culture of the core nation to the people living in the newly acquired and peripherally located regions. Even if some politicians in Poland had wanted to do this, the League of Nations prevented it from happening in Polish Upper Silesia. The Belgian Kingdom, meanwhile, respected the constitutional right to a free use of languages within its state border lines. The lens is trained on the Ukrainisation of Soviet Ukraine by means of a language many considered insufficiently codified to function as a standard language, as well as the development of Yugoslav nationhood in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (since 1929 the Kingdom of Yugoslavia), among other means, by the creation and teaching of the Serbo-Croatian-Slovenian language.

Between 1917 and 1919, several separate Ukrainian republics manifested transient forms of independence. Whereas a smaller part of what we today know as Ukraine eventually joined Poland in 1920, the largest part was incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1924 and became known as Soviet Ukraine, the Soviet Union's second largest republic.⁸ Soviet Ukraine is here understood as a borderland because it was a newly created administrative entity joining the Soviet Union at its southwestern state border line. From the mid-1920s onwards, a plan devised in Moscow was put into practice forcing inhabitants to learn and use the Ukrainian language and make themselves familiar with Ukrainian history and culture. Whereas historians have usually highlighted the generosity of Stalin

in supporting the use of a non-Russian language, something he did not do elsewhere in the Soviet Union, Matthew D. Pauly emphasises the pragmatism of that decision; the effectiveness of totalitarianism depended on citizens understanding its message.⁹ Ukrainisation largely failed for the following reasons. Most importantly, Ukrainisation could not be orchestrated from above, as not enough people had a sufficient knowledge of the Ukrainian language, and too little resources were made available.¹⁰ Teachers who knew Ukrainian and lived elsewhere in the Soviet Union were not transferred to Soviet Ukraine because that was considered too expensive, and most local schools provided language training without the use of the scarcely available new textbooks.¹¹

As a result, Soviet educational policy was a fairly irrelevant factor in the project of Ukrainisation, which largely depended on the practices of local historical actors.¹² A significant number of professionals interested in the Ukrainian language training of primary school children developed innovative activities.¹³ Soviet Ukraine became a laboratory for research on reform pedagogy, in much the same way that Polish Upper Silesia did, but these initiatives never generated a wider impact. Soviet authorities did not have enough trust in teachers (owing to their supposed belonging to the intelligentsia) in order to mould them into a nationally loyal segment of the population, while many inhabitants considered Ukrainian too lacking in prestige to open up a path of opportunities for social advancement.¹⁴

Does the profile of borderland schooling hold for interwar Soviet Ukraine? Schooling in Soviet Ukraine was determined by its primary characteristic: its relatively greater dependence on international and transnational changes. Language learning conditions for Ukrainian differed fundamentally, depending on which side of the newly drawn Polish-Ukrainian interwar state border line inhabitants lived. Whereas in Poland, the state reduced the number of Ukrainian-speaking schools in its south-eastern borderlands, in Soviet Ukraine, more pupils acquired a knowledge of the language. In the long term, this facilitated the standardisation and academic use of the Ukrainian language.¹⁵ Once included into the Soviet Ukraine, moreover, a transnational flow of ideas arose in the form of a pedagogical trend for progressive education enthusiastically borrowing insights from abroad.¹⁶ The fact both Polish Upper Silesia and Soviet Ukraine functioned as transnational laboratories of reform pedagogy corresponds to an insight put forward within Border Studies, namely that borderlands are likely to become hubs of cultural innovation. Equally true, however, is the fact that borderlands could turn into spaces of political control or cultural stagnation, as was frequently the case in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy.¹⁷

Special educational policies, which the profile of borderland schooling revealed to be a common phenomenon in interwar borderlands, were also implemented in Soviet Ukraine. Unlike in other places in the Soviet Union, the teaching of a non-Russian language was made compulsory. Moreover, whereas the primary school curriculum in the Soviet Union lasted for four years, the Soviet Ukrainian curriculum lasted for seven years, a result of the Civil War (1917–1922) which hit the region harder than elsewhere in the Soviet Union and meant that it took longer to restore school infrastructure and homogenise curricula.¹⁸ The third characteristic of the profile of borderland schooling also applies to Soviet Ukraine. In the second half of the 1920s and the first half of the 1930s, when power manifested itself mostly through a preventive power strategy (prescribing primary school education in Ukrainian instead of in Russian) combined with the incentive to guide the behaviour of pupils through pedagogical knowledge, policy measures were highly negotiable precisely because the reality at the time (a lack of Ukrainian speakers and educational resources) made these measures almost irrelevant. Ukrainisation worked in schools with well-educated and well-motivated teachers, but could equally fail when teachers showed no interest or were opposed to the use of progressive methods.¹⁹ The question remains open with regards to what we could learn if these negotiations were interpreted through the prism of human territoriality. The answer may be that the dynamics set in motion were less intense than in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmédy, owing to the rulers' lack of knowledge of local circumstances, their mistrust of local teachers, as well as a lack of the resources invested in the endeavour. At a later time, and this brings us to the fourth characteristic, teachers in Soviet Ukraine experienced the excesses within changing systems of power. When terror accelerated in the second half of the 1930s, Ukrainisation policies in primary education were downsized because the regime believed it had not been careful enough in its recruitment of teachers more than a decade earlier. Those judged sympathetic to Bolshevism were now viewed with suspicion. How otherwise are we to interpret the fact that the Communist Party, with the collaboration of the Soviet security police, arrested and put on trial teachers for a crime no greater than following state directives?²⁰

The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes arose in the aftermath of the First World War and was composed of parts of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire and the formerly independent Kingdom of Serbia. Initially, a pluralistic understanding of Yugoslav nationhood legitimising the commonalities among its inhabitants through an inclusion of political, regional or religious particularities was pursued.²¹ Because the state ideology of Yugoslavism was developed at a moment in time when iden-

tities such as being Serbian, Slovenian or Croatian were still contingent and dynamic, it could eventually have generated a hybrid but vernacular Yugoslav identity. Negotiations on the meaning of Yugoslav nationhood took place in various local settings regardless of their geographical proximity to a state border line. In the process of making the border, however, the endeavour failed because of the centralisation and politicisation of Yugoslav nationhood undertaken by Belgrade authorities during the authoritarian rule that characterised the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (created in 1929). State authorities increasingly doubted whether their citizens were willing enough to place their regional identities within the larger idea of Yugoslav ideology. That it would be the dissociation of Croatian Catholic inhabitants from the Yugoslavian national idea, which imploded the whole endeavour after the assassination of King Alexander in 1934, could never have been foreseen in the early 1920s. In the initial understanding of a pluralistic Yugoslav national identity, more space was foreseen for Serbian and Croat discourses than for other regional or religious affiliations. Only at a later stage did Croatian national belonging come to be understood as incompatible with Yugoslav national belonging.²² This does not mean, however, that no other verbal battles about language and belonging were fought in border regions, such as Slovenia or Macedonia, or around another religious group, such as South Slav Muslims.²³ Despite the inclusion of Slovenian words in the newly created Serbo-Croatian-Slovenian language, 'educational authorities', Pieter Troch wrote, 'saw Slovenes as a peripheral part of Yugoslav national history and failed to take advantage of Slovenian intellectuals to integrate their historical memory within an overarching Yugoslav narrative'.²⁴ Other regions or groups were considered even less central to Yugoslav state ideology. Because a considerable number of local teachers in Macedonia were considered to feel more affinity with Bulgarian than with Yugoslav state ideology, they were hindered from continuing their profession, leaving their schools at times empty. The special incentives designed to attract teachers in favour of the Yugoslav cause failed to fill the gaps in the teaching corps.²⁵ And whereas religious diversity was propagated and concessions were granted to groups such as South Slav Muslims, these initiatives were kept small enough to ensure that Islam could not compete with the presumed Christian understanding of Yugoslav nationhood, a construction facilitating a clear distinction with the newly founded Republic of Turkey.²⁶

Belgian nationalism, which had been strengthened during the First World War, was equally incapable of encompassing the feelings of belonging of the inhabitants of the Belgian Kingdom, and imploded from within. As the outcome of a democratic decision-making process initiated by politicians fighting for the Flemish case, a preventive power strategy

was articulated in the language laws of 1932 which granted the German-speaking border regions the right to decide the language of instruction in local schools. By contrast, the dictatorship in Yugoslavia preferred to execute its power as prohibition, domination and repression. The results of that decision are visible in the border city of Caribrod, which had belonged to Bulgaria and switched sovereignty to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in the aftermath of the First World War. As was the case with Eupen, it was situated in an isogloss zone without major religious differences among the local population, and was of no particular interest for the Great Powers. In the autumn of 1921, the language of education in primary schools switched to Serbian, and in 1923, the Bulgarian school system ceased to exist and Bulgarian teachers were required to leave.²⁷ Increasingly, local inhabitants were seen as nationally disloyal and the Yugoslav police repressed everything related to Bulgarian culture.²⁸

Nevertheless, even during the dictatorship, as the cases of the German-speaking *Donauschwaben* and Romanian-speaking *Vlachs* will now illustrate, educational policies and practices within Yugoslavia's borderlands were negotiable. The home grounds of the *Donauschwaben*, today largely included in the Vojvodina, became a space where these negotiations not only foregrounded the complexities, contradictions and excesses of the system of power but also amplified them. Just as happened in Polish Upper Silesia, state authorities were obliged to respect the rights for minorities laid down in supranational law (in this case the Treaty of Saint-Germain). Yugoslav state authorities had a variety of reasons for adhering to these requirements, depending on the region. In Slovenia, which had belonged to the Austrian part of the Dual Monarchy and where German had been widely practiced, they chose to close German-speaking schools in order to weaken German influence. In the Vojvodina, on the other hand, the regime chose to transform formerly Hungarian-speaking schools into German-speaking schools in order to weaken Hungarian influence.²⁹ The language learning opportunities for *Donauschwaben* remained less favourable than in Polish Upper Silesia because the Treaty of Saint-Germain had been signed three years before the Geneva Convention, a period in which the League of Nations had further developed supranational protection measures. The measures taken to diminish the scope of minority schools here were more brutal than in Poland. State authorities decided on the basis of children's names who was entitled to be educated in German, with the result that German-speaking children with Slavic or Hungarian names were deprived of the opportunity to learn in their mother tongue.³⁰

And yet, *Donauschwaben* managed to change the power dynamics that applied to them. They learned that by framing themselves as a national minority, and not merely a cultural one, their cultural and linguistic needs

could be met. As a national minority, they were able to attract the attention of a powerful transnational actor, Germany, and have their concerns addressed by the League of Nations in Geneva. This strategy was not as obvious a choice for them as it was for German speakers in Polish Upper Silesia because the *Donauschwaben* had never been part of Germany. What followed were intense negotiations at different levels of decision making along the logic of human territoriality, eventually including the involvement of the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gustav Stresemann, who pleaded their case in Geneva, and leading to a change in the enrolment policy for German-speaking minority schools. Name analysis was exchanged for a procedure similar to the one practised in Polish Upper Silesia, based on what a parent declared their child's mother tongue to be. Germany was thus able to play a decisive role in changing the minds of these borderland inhabitants (whom Yugoslav state authorities had merely been using to de-Hungarianise a region) to such an extent that they eventually also supported National Socialism and voluntarily joined the German Army.³¹ Although Romanian authorities never invested the same amount of money as German decision makers, and could not lean on a vast history of pedagogical knowledge, through a bilateral Romanian-Yugoslavian agreement, they could influence the curriculum of schools teaching in Romanian.³² These schools were located in the north of the kingdom, close to the Romanian state border line, as well as within a more centrally located part of Eastern Serbia where the Romans had been present since antiquity.³³ This observation indicates that when applying the profile of borderland schooling to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia), it is important to follow where the change of state border lines generated its effects. Following the borderscape means tracing how, after the drawing of such lines, transient space was given meaning to through the interaction between the rulers and the ruled throughout a country and at various levels of decision making.

The Third Reich's annexation of Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy caused a dramatic upheaval in borderland schooling. Although the German nationalisation campaign was necessarily more severe in the east as a result of Nazi racial ideology, similarities can be detected in the way in which education was organised in former Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy. In order to provide a monolingual German school curriculum on both sides of the Reich, a majority of the teachers were brought in from the mainland.³⁴ The immigrant teachers held the highest positions and were responsible for the proliferation of National Socialist ideology in schools. Whereas loyal Belgian teachers had been transferred to the Belgian mainland before the establishment of the German occupation, loyal

Polish teachers became the target of an elimination campaign directed against the pre-war intelligentsia.³⁵ Those locals who remained needed to confirm their loyalty to the Third Reich by accepting German citizenship (and often enrolling to the NSDAP) in the case of the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, or by signing the *Volksliste* (a list classifying borderland inhabitants into categories of Germanness according to National Socialist criteria) in the case of Polish Upper Silesia.³⁶

After the liberation, life was difficult in the borderlands. The regions of Sankt Vith and Malmedy had suffered greatly during the Ardennes Offensive, while in Polish Upper Silesia, many could not identify with the new communist regime.³⁷ In addition, the obsession with ethnically pure nation-states meant that there was no longer any political will to supervise the treatment of non-dominant groups. The successor of the League of Nations, the United Nations, focused on individual freedoms instead of on rights for what had in the interwar years been called minorities.³⁸ This change put an end to the special conditions that minorities in Central and Eastern Europe had enjoyed and heralded the comprehensive integration of the borderlands within their nation-states. The reintegration of the border regions to, respectively, the Belgian and Polish states had much in common with each other. First, there was an overall conviction that Germans needed to leave. Whereas most Germans had left the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy before the end of the war, many Germans moved out of Polish Upper Silesia within a year of the end of the war.³⁹ And second, those who were considered to have been too sympathetic to the German military cause lost – temporarily or not – their civil rights.⁴⁰ Both Belgian and Polish authorities also believed that offering children the perspective of a meaningful future within the post-war national set-up could secure the post-war borders and integrate the borderlands with the mainland. Policy measures were therefore introduced to reach more children, to have them in school for a longer time, and to offer them a carefully selected corps of teachers, often brought in from the mainland.⁴¹ The relative tolerance that characterised the interwar years was replaced by a monolingual French or Polish language policy, involving the screening of textbooks and teaching materials.⁴² Special measures for the borderlands were considered a temporary solution, since the main aim was to make them soon an undifferentiable part of the mainland.⁴³

The early post-war renationalisation campaign in Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy was more easily realised than in Poland for a number of reasons. The region was smaller, had a longer history of national political stabilisation, and had suffered less serious devastation during the war. But the effects of this campaign were later softened.⁴⁴ The differences in entrance fees for Catholic and non-Catholic secondary schools became the

central topic of a significant national debate in Belgium on the role of religion in society. By subsidising both systems, the so-called School Pact from 1958 consolidated confessional peace and institutionalised segmented societal pluralism.⁴⁵ After confessional peace had been attained, the Belgian political agenda moved on to language disputes between Flemish and Walloons. The first compromise was reached in 1962, when a law established four language areas within Belgium (a Dutch-speaking area in the north, a French-speaking area in the south, a German-speaking area in the east and a bilingual area in Brussels), a decision later consolidated in the Belgian Constitution.⁴⁶ In the nine municipalities comprising the German-speaking area, the rights of French speakers, including the existence of French-speaking primary schools, were to be guaranteed, and in two municipalities in the French-speaking area, Malmedy and Waimes, the same applied to German-speaking inhabitants. Since 1970, borderland inhabitants have greatly benefitted from the six Belgian state reforms initiated by Flemish politicians designed to steadily replace the centralised state with a regionalised structure composed of three communities responsible for policy areas such as education (the Flemish-, French- and German-speaking communities) and three regions responsible for policy areas such as roads (the Flemish, Walloon and Brussels-Capital Region).⁴⁷ The regions of Eupen and Sankt Vith were granted cultural autonomy at the beginning of the 1970s, establishing the first Board of German Cultural Society in 1973.⁴⁸ This would last until 1989, when the government of the German-speaking community was given responsibility for the organisation of the local educational system, and until 1997, when it could also decide upon language training within their schools.⁴⁹ Currently, borderland pupils receive foreign language training (either in French or German) for at least two hours a week from the beginning of their primary school career, an amount that steadily increases as they progress through the educational system.⁵⁰ In addition, every pupil is given the right to be taught their religion. In the school year 2019–2020, 72 per cent of pupils received an education in Roman Catholicism, 13 per cent in Islam, 10 per cent in ethics, and 4 per cent in Protestantism.⁵¹ A survey on the foreign language competencies of pupils conducted in several European countries in 2012 indicated that the German-speaking community was exceptional for starting foreign language training that early. The results of that policy in the long run, however, are somehow surprising. By the fourth year of secondary school, the survey concluded, the knowledge of pupils of their first foreign language (whether German or French) was nevertheless average in European terms, whereas the knowledge of their second foreign language (English) scored significantly above average.⁵²

Polish national policies towards education in the borderlands softened after the 1956 protests, but hardened again later. A further divergence between Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy materialised in the years to follow. The first primary school in Poland after the war offering a bilingual Polish-German curriculum was the Willy-Brandt-Schule in Warsaw, which was established in 1978 as a diplomatic school and was financially supported by the German state.⁵³ Whereas German language training eventually returned to school curricula in Poland, a greater emphasis was always put on the knowledge of Russian. After the collapse of communism, the public educational sector was rapidly privatised. A private bilingual Polish-German primary school in Szczecin was opened in the early 1990s, and a second one later followed in Wrocław.⁵⁴ In Katowice, the gap was filled by a private English international school, offering teaching in the native tongue of a child, which could be German 'if resources allowed for it'.⁵⁵ For a long time, public schools in Poland could not offer foreign language teachers competitive labour conditions. In the Silesian District (including the cities Katowice and Lubliniec), it was recently decided to start English foreign language training from the first grade. German language training follows in the fifth or seventh grade (after the school reforms of 2017, primary school education in Poland now lasts for eight years).⁵⁶ It wasn't until 2018 that a public school in Katowice opened a bilingual Polish-German teaching branch for the seventh and eighth grade.⁵⁷ A petition launched by the German-speaking radio station in Katowice in 2019 to provide comprehensive public bilingual Polish-German primary education has yet to make any headway.⁵⁸

This conclusion has argued that borderlands in interwar Europe did not always have a distinct liminal position. They could vary in spatial extent, and the meaning of what was peripheral and what was central could change. Consequently, the relevance and relative importance of the four characteristics within the profile of borderland schooling can also differ from case to case, or change within a case over time. What unites the cases discussed in the conclusion is that the spaces and lives of children in the interwar years were influenced by the institutional power of borders. Using the framework of comparison offered in this book for the analysis of other case study borderlands on the European continent during and beyond the interwar years would not only enable us to assess the impact of contextual factors and other spaces on the profile of borderland schooling, but also reveal under which conditions borderland children were more likely to be transformed from spoken children into speaking children, thereby participating in and co-creating their environment.⁵⁹ These insights could open up new possibilities for an understanding of the rise of state involvement

in the recent European past and, indeed, of the European continent as an entity actively constituted by space.

Notes

1. Eser, *Volk, Staat, Gott!*, 664.
2. Wung-Sung, 'We Remain What We Are', 142–44; Nørr, 'Nationalpolitik', 235–87.
3. Rexheuser, *Kulturen und Gedächtnis*, 138–39.
4. Fischer, *Alsace to the Alsations*, 138; Villgrater, *Katakombenschule*.
5. Garleff, 'Die kulturelle Selbstverwaltung'.
6. Schödl, 'Lange Abschiede', 464 and 468.
7. Eriksen et al., 'Governments', 390.
8. Magosci, *A History of Ukraine*, 523–28.
9. Pauly, *Breaking the Tongue*, 67.
10. *Ibid.*, 221.
11. *Ibid.*, 85.
12. *Ibid.*, 91.
13. *Ibid.*, 104–30.
14. *Ibid.*, 28, 164.
15. Yekelchuk, *Ukraine*, 99.
16. Pauly, *Breaking the Tongue*, 48–49.
17. Donnan et al., 'The Political Anthropology'.
18. Pauly, *Breaking the Tongue*, 24.
19. *Ibid.*, 156.
20. *Ibid.*, 38.
21. Bulatović, 'Struggling with Yugoslavism'; Ferhabdžević, 'Fes oder Hut?'.
22. Troch, *Nationalism*, 94 and 223.
23. Boškowska, *Das Jugoslawische Makedonien*; Giomi, 'Reforma'.
24. Troch, *Nationalism*, 94.
25. *Ibid.*, 205.
26. *Ibid.*, 121.
27. See Stefanov, *Erfindung*, vol. 65, 317.
28. *Ibid.*, 454.
29. Wehler, *Nationalitätenpolitik*, 22–23.
30. Koljanin et al., 'The Role of History', 7.
31. Mezger, *Forging Germans*, 29–68.
32. Koljanin et al., 'The Role of History', 9.
33. Fifer, 'Assimilation'.
34. Schärer, *Deutsche Annexionspolitik*, vol. 38, 217; Kaczmarek, 'Województwo', 28.
35. Lejeune, *Die Säuberung: Ernüchterung*, vol. 1, 143; Trzebiatowski, 'Wkład', 9; Walczak, *Działalność oświatowa*, 57–66.
36. Quadflieg, 'Zwangssoldaten'; Kaczmarek, 'Województwo', 30.
37. Elstob, *Hitler's Last Offensive*; Kosiński, *Oficjalne*, 112–13.
38. Lemberg, *Grenzen*, 179.
39. Jaworski, 'Szkolnictwo i nauka', 209; Łempiński, *Przesiedlenie ludności niemieckiej*, 162, 217, 220 and 255; Hofmann, *Die Nachkriegszeit*, 265.

40. Lejeune, *Die Säuberung*, vol. 2, 83–85; Kleu, *Die Neuordnung*, 94; Bahr et al., *Oberschlesien*, 70; Popieliński, 'Sytuacja mniejszości niemieckiej', 407.
41. Lejeune, *Die Säuberung*, vol. 2, 43; Magierska, *Ziemie Zachodnie*, 248; Szlufik, *Szkolnictwo podstawowe*, 267.
42. Schmitz, *Zur bildungspolitischen Entwicklung*, 21; Chmielewski, *Kształcenie nauczycieli*, 40–42.
43. Kleu, *Die Neuordnung*, 86–88 and 127; Venken, 'Nationalization Campaigns', 236–37.
44. Ibid.
45. Depaepe, *De pedagogisering achterna*, 250.
46. Witte and Meynen, *De Geschiedenis van België na 1945*, 98–104.
47. Keirse and Gerard. 'Decretale stappen', 85–104; Dujardin and Scheid, 'De communautarisering', 105–29.
48. Fickers, 'Generational Conflicts', 171.
49. See the website of the Parliament der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft Belgiens, *Deutschsprachige Gemeinschaft*.
50. Ministerium der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft Belgiens, *Unterricht*, 31.
51. Ministerium der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft Belgiens, *Schülerzahlen*.
52. Ministerium der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft Belgiens, *European Survey*.
53. See website Willy-Brandt-Schule Warschau.
54. See websites of Deutsch-Polnische Grundschule im Evangelischen Martin-Luther-Zentrum für Diakonie und Bildung and Polsko-Niemiecka Szkoła Podstawowa 'Nasza Szkoła'.
55. See website Complex of Silesian International Schools.
56. See website Szkoła Podstawowa nr 1 w Lublińcu; Szkoła Podstawowa im. Partyzantów Polskich w Żabnicy, *Plan; Dobra Szkoła, Ustawy wprowadzające reformę*.
57. Szkoła Podstawowa nr 4 im. Jerzego Ziętka w Katowicach. *Klasa dwujęzyczna*.
58. mittendrin, *Dwujęzyczna szkoła w Katowicach?*
59. Venken, 'Borderland Child Heterotopias'.

APPENDIX

Belgian and Polish Governments and Ministers Responsible for Education



Table A.1. Belgian governments and ministers responsible for education

Government	Political Profile	Beginning	End	Minister Responsible for Education
Gérard Cooreman	Catholic, liberal, socialist	31.05.1918	13.11.1918	Charles de Broqueville 21.11.1918 – 20.11.1918
Léon Delacroix	Catholic, liberal, socialist	21.11.1918	17.11.1919	Charles de Broqueville 21.11.1918 – 02.12.1919
Léon Delacroix	Catholic, liberal, socialist	02.12.1919	25.10.1920	Jules Renkin 02.12.1919 – 02.06.1920 Henri Jaspar 02.06.1920 – 19.11.1920
Henri Carton de Wiart	Catholic, liberal, socialist	20.11.1920	19.10.1921	Henri Carton de Wiart 20.11.1920 – 23.10.1921
Henri Carton de Wiart	Catholic, liberal	24.10.1921	20.11.1921	Henri Carton de Wiart 24.10.1921 – 20.11.1921
Georges Theunis	Catholic, liberal	16.12.1921	27.02.1924	Paul Berryer 16.12.1921 – 10.03.1924
Georges Theunis	Catholic, liberal	11.03.1924	05.04.1925	Paul Berryer 11.03.1924 – 05.04.1925
Aloys Van de Vyvere	Catholic	13.05.1925	22.05.1925	
Prosper Poullet	Catholic, socialist	17.06.1925	11.05.1926	Camille Huysmans 17.06.1925 – 11.05.1926
Henri Jaspar	Catholic, liberal, socialist	20.05.1926	21.11.1927	Camille Huysmans 20.05.1926 – 22.11.1927

Government	Political Profile	Beginning	End	Minister Responsible for Education
Henri Jaspar	Catholic, liberal	22.11.1927	21.05.1931	Albert Carnoy 22.11.1927 – 19.10.1929 Henri Bael 20.10.1929 – 21.05.1931
Jules Renkin	Catholic, liberal	06.06.1931	18.05.1932	Jules Renkin 15.06.1931 – 27.02.1932 Henri Carton de Tournai 27.02.1932 – 23.05.1932
Jules Renkin	Catholic, liberal	23.05.1932	18.10.1932	Henri Carton de Tournai 23.05.1932 – 22.10.1932
Charles de Broqueville	Catholic, liberal	22.10.1932	13.12.1932	Prosper Poullet 22.10.1932 – 13.12.1932
Charles de Broqueville	Catholic, liberal	17.12.1932	06.06.1934	Maurice August Lippens 17.12.1932 – 12.06.1934
Charles de Broqueville	Catholic, liberal	12.06.1934	13.11.1934	Victor Maistriaux 12.06.1934 – 13.11.1934
Georges Theunis	Catholic, liberal	20.11.1934	19.03.1935	Jules Hiernaux 20.11.1934 – 25.03.1935
Paul Van Zeeland	Catholic, liberal, socialist	25.03.1935	26.05.1936	François Bovesse 25.03.1935 – 13.06.1936
Paul Van Zeeland	Catholic, liberal, socialist	13.06.1936	25.10.1937	Julius Hoste 13.06.1936 – 23.11.1937
Paul-Émile Janson	liberal, Catholic, socialist	24.11.1937	13.05.1938	Julius Hoste 24.11.1936 – 14.05.1938
Paul-Henri Spaak	socialist, Catholic, liberal	15.05.1938	09.02.1939	Octave Dierckx 15.05.1938 – 09.02.1939
Hubert Pierlot	Catholic, socialist	22.02.1939	27.02.1939	Edgard Blancquaert 22.02.1939 – 15.04.1939
Hubert Pierlot	Catholic, liberal, socialist	16.04.1939	17.04.1939	Edgard Blancquaert 16.04.1939 – 17.04.1939
Hubert Pierlot	Catholic, liberal	18.04.1939	03.09.1939	Jules Duesberg 18.04.1939 – 03.09.1939
Hubert Pierlot	Catholic, liberal, socialist	03.09.1939	28.05.1940 (continued as government in exile in Great Britain until 21.09.1944)	Jules Duesberg 03.09.1939 – 05.01.1940 Eugène Soudan 05.01.1940 – 28.05.1940

Source: Dumoulin, Gerard, Van Den Wijngaert and Dujardin, *Nieuwe Geschiedenis*, 1111; Van Molle, *Het Belgische parlement*.

Table A.2. Polish governments and ministers responsible for education

Government	Political Profile	Beginning	End	Minister Responsible for Education
Jędrzej Moraczewski	centre-left interim government	17.11.1918	16.01.1919	Ksawery Prauss 17.11.1918 – 16.01.1919
Ignacy Jan Paderewski	'grand coalition', socialist, agrarian, conservative and right-wing national democrats	16.01.1919	09.12.1919	Jan Łukasiewicz 16.01.1919 – 09.12.1919
Leopold Skulski	government supported by Józef Piłsudski, then 'Chief of State', without stable parliamentary majority	13.12.1919	09.06.1920	Tadeusz Łopuszański 13.12.1919 – 22.06.1920
Władysław Grabski	centre-right government, national democrats with centrist agrarians	23.06.1920	24.07.1920	Tadeusz Łopuszański 23.06.1920 – 24.07.1920
Wincenty Witos	war government during the Polish-Soviet war, grand coalition led by centrist agrarian party	24.07.1920	13.09.1921	Maciej Rataj 24.07.1920 – 13.09.1921
Antoni Ponikowski	so called 'Cabinet of Experts' supported by centre-right political parties	19.09.1921	05.03.1922	Antoni Ponikowski 19.09.1921 – 09.03.1922
Antoni Ponikowski	so called 'Cabinet of Experts' supported by centre-left political parties	10.03.1922	06.06.1922	Antoni Ponikowski 10.03.1922 – 06.06.1922
Artur Śliwiński	cabinet nominated by Józef Piłsudski, then 'Chief of State', without stable parliamentary majority	28.06.1922	07.07.1922	Julian Nowak 28.06.1922 – 07.07.1922

Government	Political Profile	Beginning	End	Minister Responsible for Education
Julian Nowak	cabinet nominated by Józef Piłsudski, then 'Chief of State', without stable parliamentary majority	31.07.1922	14.12.1922	Julian Nowak 31.07.1922 – 21.08.1922 Kazimierz Władysław Kumaniecki 21.08.1922 – 14.12.1922
Władysław Sikorski	centrist government formed after the assassination of the president of the Republic, Gabriel Narutowicz, without stable parliamentary majority	19.12.1922	26.05.1923	Józef Mikułowski-Pomorski 19.12.1922 – 26.05.1923
Wincenty Witos	government formed by the leader of the centrist agrarian party and the right-wing national democratic movement	28.05.1923	14.12.1923	Stanisław Głąbiński 28.05.1923 – 14.09.1923 Stanisław Grabski 27.10.1923 – 14.12.1923
Władysław Grabski	centre-right government of specialists supported by Christian-democratic, national democratic and centrist agrarian parties	19.12.1923	14.11.1925	Bolesław Miklaszewski 19.12.1923 – 11.12.1924 Jan Wiktor Zawadzki (Acting) 11.12.1924 – 25.03.1925 Stanisław Grabski 25.03.1925 – 19.11.1925
Aleksander Skrzyński	'grand coalition', Christian-democratic, centrist agrarian, right-wing national democratic and socialist parties	20.11.1925	05.05.1926	Stanisław Grabski 20.11.1925 – 09.05.1926
Wincenty Witos	centre-right government supported by Christian-democratic, national democratic and centrist agrarian parties	10.05.1926	14.05.1926	Stanisław Grabski 10.05.1926 – 15.05.1926

(continued)

Government	Political Profile	Beginning	End	Minister Responsible for Education
Coup d'état (przewrót majowy)	government run by politicians supporting the leading role of Józef Piłsudski	15.05.1926		
Kazimierz Bartel	Polish Socialist Party	15.05.1926	04.06.1926	Józef Mikułowski-Pomorski 15.05.1926 – 07.06.1926
Kazimierz Bartel	Polish Socialist Party	08.06.1926	24.09.1926	Józef Mikułowski-Pomorski 08.06.1926 – 07.07.1926 Antoni Sujkowski 07.07.1926 – 26.09.1926
Kazimierz Bartel	Polish Socialist Party	27.09.1926	30.09.1926	Antoni Sujkowski 27.09.1926 – 30.09.1926
Józef Piłsudski	Polish Socialist Party	02.10.1926	27.06.1928	Kazimierz Bartel 02.10.1926 – 09.01.1927 Gustaw Dobrucki 09.01.1927 – 27.06.1928
Kazimierz Bartel	Bezpartyjny Blok Współpracy z Rządem (The Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government)*	28.06.1928	13.04.1929	Kazimierz Świtalski 26.06.1928 – 13.04.1929
Kazimierz Świtalski	The Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government	13.04.1929	17.12.1929	Sławomir Czerwiński 16.06.1929 – 28.12.1929
Kazimierz Bartel	The Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government	29.12.1929	17.03.1930	Sławomir Czerwiński 29.12.1929 – 28.03.1930
Walery Sławek	The Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government	29.03.1930	23.08.1930	Sławomir Czerwiński 29.03.1930 – 24.08.1930
Józef Piłsudski	The Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government	25.08.1930	04.12.1930	Sławomir Czerwiński 25.08.1930 – 04.12.1930

Government	Political Profile	Beginning	End	Minister Responsible for Education
Walery Sławek	The Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government	05.12.1930	25.05.1931	Sławomir Czerwiński 05.12.1930 – 27.05.1931
Aleksander Prystor	The Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government	28.05.1931	09.05.1933	Sławomir Czerwiński 28.05.1931 – 04.08.1931 Janusz Jędrzejewicz 12.08.1931 – 09.05.1933
Janusz Jędrzejewicz	The Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government	10.05.1933	16.05.1934	Janusz Jędrzejewicz 10.05.1933 – 23.02.1934 Wacław Jędrzejewicz 23.02.1934 – 16.05.1934
Leon Kozłowski	The Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government	16.05.1934	22.03.1935	Wacław Jędrzejewicz 16.05.1934 – 22.03.1935
Walery Sławek	The Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government	23.03.1935	14.10.1935	Wacław Jędrzejewicz 23.03.1935 – 12.10.1935
Marian Zyndram-Kościałkowski	The Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government	14.10.1935	16.05.1936	Konstanty Chyliński 13.10.1935 – 05.12.1935 Wojciech Alojzy Świętosławski 05.12.1935 – 30.09.1939
Felicjan Sławoj Składkowski	A government led by the Camp of National Unity seeking the support of radicalized national democrats	16.05.1936	30.10.1939	Wojciech Alojzy Świętosławski 05.12.1935 – 30.09.1939

* The Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government was an organization supporting the leading role of Józef Piłsudski and 'a means of consolidating the military's control over the political life of Poland' (Prażmowska, *Poland*, 122).

Source: Eckert, *Historia polityczna Polski*.

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